

# FOR LOVE OF MARTHA QUINTAL.

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*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Nov 1873; 38, 5; American Periodicals*  
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## FOR LOVE OF MARTHA QUINTAL.

BY W. H. MACY.

"WHAT do you suppose ails Rodney lately?" asked old Tim Bolles, as he sat smoking his pipe on the windlass-end, while several others of the watch were grouped near him, so that the question was put, generally, to all of us. "He seems to have something wearing upon his mind. Just now he relieved me at the wheel, and he was so absent-minded, I don't really believe he understood what course he was to steer."

"Why, didn't he repeat the course after you?" was asked.

"Yes, he did; but it was in a kind of mechanical way, like a man might do that was dreaming. He has had a queer streak in him ever since we left Pitcairn's; and sometimes I think he's luny."

"I know what ails him," spoke up young Green, Rodney's chum. "He's love-cracked, and that's the whole truth of the matter."

"Love-cracked! After what woman?"

"Martha Quintal."

There was no need to ask further questions. Every one knew who Martha Quintal was; the belle of Pitcairn's Island, whose bright glance and ravishing form had fascinated more than one susceptible young seaman, among the many who had made flying visits to that romantic islet.

"Well, I suppose he'll get over it by the time we get to Valparaiso," said old Tim, after a short cogitation upon what he had heard. "It's of little use, his making himself spooney about any girl at Pitcairn's, for everything there is *taboo* to outsiders."

"You don't know Rodney Gove as well as I do, if you think so," returned Green. "It'll be a long day before he'll get over it, if he ever does; and what's more, if there's a possible way for him to get back to the island, he'll manage it."

"But he can't get there in *this* ship. It's not likely she'll go that way again."

"That's true," was the reply. But Green would say no more, and, by breaking off the subject abruptly, seemed to indicate that he had already said more than he intended. If he knew of any plan of deserting, on the part of Rodney Gove, as

was not unlikely, he had no idea of betraying it. With a keen sense of honor, as sailors understand the word, he would keep his friend's secret, and "die in it at the stake."

Our visit to the surf-bound shores of Pitcairn's Island had been made about two weeks previous to this conversation, and it was during our stay of three days that young Rodney, in his visits to the shore, had lost his heart, past all recovery, as he then thought.

Martha Quintal was, as may be conjectured, a lineal descendant, in direct line, from the mutineer Matthew Quintal, one of the associates of Fletcher Christian, in the *Bounty* affair. She was one of the finest specimens of the race which have sprung from the union of those English adventurers with the *Fayaways* of Tahiti; a race who owe much of their physical beauty to the regularity of their lives, their simple abstemious diet; still more to their ignorance of the torturing appliances whereby a higher type of civilization seeks to improve upon nature, in shaping and ornamenting the female form divine. There is to be seen in these young women a happy union or blending of the robust and the graceful. Their faces beam with smiles, indicating unruffled good-humor, while all their acts betray the perfection of unsophisticated innocence, united with a degree of modesty that would do honor to the most virtuous and enlightened people on earth. Imagine, reader, not a colony, but a race indigenous to the soil, numbering less than a single hundred, dwelling in a little world of their own, to whom all the rest of mankind are foreigners! And for a government, imagine the old patriarchal system, preserved nearly in its pristine purity, as handed down from old Jack Adams—with woman suffrage grafted upon it—and say if this green isle of the Pacific be not a nearer approach to Utopia than any spot with which you are acquainted?

As the island is so small, it was foreseen that ere many years it must be fully stocked with population, by the operation of the law of natural increase, and care had been

taken to prevent immigration. Thus the serpent had been kept out of this Eden, and the moral status of its inhabitants might truly be called, at the time of our visit, one of primeval innocence.

The love of my shipmate for the Quintal girl was a hopeless one, even had she loved him in return, of which he had no satisfactory evidence. At least, he had none such as would have satisfied any uninterested party, though he may have deluded himself with the belief that her heart was to be had for the asking. But there was not one chance in a thousand that the successor of old Adams would have permitted him to dwell among his people; and, without the patriarchal sanction, such a thing was not to be thought of. And as for enticing Martha to elope and go to a foreign land—but thereby hangs a tale, a tale of true woman's trust, and of man's villainy, such as devils might blush at. Its victim, enticed on board an English brig, never again saw the land of her birth. Flung away at Tahiti, like a wornout toy, she refused all offers of a passage back to Pitcairn's. She could only be received as an outcast, she said; and so, broken-hearted—a mother, but no wife—she died at the island of Arutua, where her child was known to have been living many years later. The truth found its way back, and the lesson was not lost upon the maidens of Pitcairn's.

But it was only wasting breath, as we all soon discovered, to rally our young comrade about his infatuation. Hopeless, as all knew it to be, it had become a part of his very existence, and even the allurements of Valparaiso had no effect in weaning him from it. The night before we were to sail from that port, Rodney Gove was missing—having deserted, as Green expressed it; “not that he loved his ship and shipmates less, but that he loved Martha Quintal more.”

It was several years afterwards that I fell in with him, in New Bedford, going out second mate of a barque to the Indian Ocean. My first question, after his hearty greeting, was:

“Why did you run away from the ship, Rodney?”

“For love of the Quintal girl,” he answered at once, in a tone that satisfied me he was quite heart-whole then, whatever he might formerly have been.

“Of course you never saw her again, though?”

“Of course I did, then.”

“Come, tell me all about it.”

We adjourned to a convenient little room in a refreshment saloon, where Rodney spun his yarn, which I give as nearly as possible in his own words.

When I found the ship had gone to sea without search being made for me, I kept on my guard for a few days, suspecting some trap, such as lying outside the harbor and sending a boat in by night. But after a week had passed, I felt pretty safe that the ship had kept on for her cruising-ground, and must be many hundred miles out in the Pacific. I was glad enough to be free, and for the very reason I have given, and no other. My destination was Pitcairn's Island, though I had no definite idea how I was to get there. I had serious thoughts of getting a boat—stealing or borrowing one—and undertaking the voyage alone.

I even entertained the idea of associating two or three desperate adventurers with me, such waifs of fortune as may be picked up any day on the Spanish main, and cutting out one of the little coasting vessels that lay moored in the bay. I could then assume command of my own vessel, bear away for the enchanted island, abduct my ladylove after the manner of a knight of old—young Lochinvar, for instance—and range the seas in triumph, living upon love alone. Of course Martha loved me in return; maidens always do in such cases. The stern parent might enter his protest; stern parents always do, you know, but love laughs at them.

It never occurred to me that I knew nothing of navigating the schooner, if I took her. I must have thought that a blind instinct would shape a course directly for Pitcairn's. Martha Quintal was my compass, magnet, pole, anything, in fact; there was no such thing as going astray.

In short, I don't know what wild schemes I didn't let my thoughts run upon, all tending to this one great object. But before I had got any one of them into shape, so as to attempt its execution, I was saved the folly of making either a criminal or a suicide of myself, by learning that the English ship Cornwallis, bound to China, was going to touch at the island, to land

some supplies of clothing and other necessities for the people, which had been forwarded to Valparaiso by the British government. Here was my opportunity; but on application for a berth, I found the Cornwallis had a full complement of hands. I bribed one of her crew, a young fellow of my own age, to hide me in the forepeak, and thus started on my love-mission to claim my bride—as a stowaway!

Of course I kept snug out of sight until the ship was broad out in the Pacific, and there was no danger of the captain putting back to land me. He stormed a little at finding one more man on his victualling list than was to be found on the ship's articles; but it was too late to remedy that discrepancy without throwing me overboard, so he accepted the situation. In due time we arrived off Pitcairn's, and I managed to make myself one of the boat's crew who went ashore with the captain to land the supplies. We were received, of course, with great rejoicing, and my goddess Martha was among the foremost at the water-side to welcome us. She recognized me with great pleasure, and asked me how it happened that I had returned so soon. "Because I couldn't stay away from you," I answered. She blushed, and seemed pleased at the compliment, as what woman would not be? The blush and smile completed my infatuation, and, spooney that I was, I never doubted that her heart was mine.

I felt that my fate was cast on that island, and fully made up my mind for another desertion; if, indeed, I could be said to desert from a ship to which I did not rightfully belong. So much the better, however; the captain would be glad to get rid of me, and would make no effort at recapture. I took the first opportunity that presented itself to steal away from my comrades, and soon found a secure hiding-place, high up among the rocks.

When the time arrived for pushing off, search was made for me; but it was near night, and the ship a long way off the land, so that little time could be spared. And, as I had supposed, nothing was to be seen of her next morning, she having proceeded on her voyage to China, as if to say to me, "good riddance."

But when I presented myself among the islanders, my reception was not so warm as I could have wished. They did not

want my company—that was evident; and thought it not at all to my credit that I had thus intruded it upon them. When summoned formally before the patriarch, he asked me why I came ashore, and what I intended to do there.

I felt that it was of little use to falsify or prevaricate. He probably had received an inkling of the truth from my shipmates, when they were hunting for me, before they pushed their boat off. So I answered him, boldly, that it was for the love of one of the island maidens I had taken this step.

"Who is she?" he demanded, sternly, but not angrily.

"She is called Martha Quintal," I answered, glancing toward the girl herself, who stood near, among the interested group of listeners, though all unconscious that any such disclosure as this was forthcoming.

She colored, with a blush of surprise, but not of interest in me—that was plain enough to my anxious gaze. It was equally plain to me, when too late, that I had mistaken my tactics. She might not be displeased with me for loving her (for what woman is in such a case?), but she was indignant at the manner of its announcement. Even had she been free to listen to my tale of love told in strict confidence, she might well object to receiving her first knowledge of it from an open proclamation.

My barometer of hope went down swiftly at the glance which took in all this.

"Martha," said the patriarch, "come forward."

She obeyed, with a quiet dignity and composure, now that she had recovered from the first surprise, that made her more beautiful than ever.

"Martha, did thee know of this?"

"No. It is new to me, at this moment."

"Thou hast seen this young man when he was here before?"

"Yes. As all others have seen him, on his visits to the shore, in the ship's boat."

"Has he ever received any encouragement from thee to think that he might win thy love?"

"Never."

"Art thou not betrothed to Robert Christian?"

"Yes." And the answer was given without confusion or embarrassment, as if admitting a fact which was patent to the whole population present.

"Perhaps it were better, under these circumstances, to place thy position beyond the reach of all question or doubt. In short, to give Robert Christian at once the right to protect thee."

The girl bowed her head in silent assent; and Robert Christian, a stalwart handsome youth, who, as I learned afterwards, was a grandson of the veritable Thursday October Christian, and great-grandson of Fletcher, the arch-mutineer, came forward and stood by her side. There was no embarrassment, no surprise manifested by any one at the suddenness of the transaction. Nobbs, the schoolmaster, who also acted the part in this little community of clergyman, physician, justice of the peace, and general factotum, performed the ceremony, according to the form of the English church, and there and then pronounced Robert Christian and Martha Quintal man and wife!

Was ever love's young dream more rudely broken? And I, poor spooney that I was, stood by and saw it well done; shook hands, in an imbecile way, with the beautiful bride and the happy groom; and felt, for the time being, that earth had nothing worth living for.

But this feeling did not last long. My companions made light of my infatuation, while they made me at home among them, and entertained me kindly, as if they felt that my power for harm was gone, and they could afford to dismiss all fears on my account. Martha and her proud husband made quite as free with me as did

the others; and to the certainty that my love was utterly hopeless, was added a consciousness that I had made an arrant fool of myself. All these causes operated to effect a rapid cure, and within a week's time I was able to meet the object of my once absorbing passion with scarcely a throb of the heart or quickening of the pulse.

And there was yet another lesson which I learned. Blameless and correct as were their lives in that Utopia, there was much in their ways and customs to which it would have been very hard for me to have educated myself. As old Bolles used to say, "it was all well enough for them that was brought up to it." A thousand little matters satisfied me that such a life would have been incompatible with my tastes; and though love might have worked wonders, if Martha Quintal had become my wife, I have strong doubts whether it is not better ordered just as it is. When I got a passage away from the island in the next passing ship, I must acknowledge that I felt rather glad to leave my kind hosts—not omitting her whom I had thought a necessary part of my existence only a few short days before. I have never visited the place since, and it is quite likely they have forgotten all about such a foolish adventurer; but I can honestly say that if Robert Christian is satisfied, I am.

I thought, and doubtless the readers will agree with me, that Rodney was quite effectually cured. So much so that some of his conclusions were libellous.

# FRANK OSBORN'S BROTHER.

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Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Jul 1870; 32, 1; American Periodicals  
pg. 50

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BY W. H. MACY.

THE inner harbor at Honolulu presented a lively scene at the close of the month of October, 185-. A hundred and fifty ships were crowded into that little basin, all moored head and stern, with flying jibbooms in, and yards pointed fore and aft to economize space. For nearly all the belated whalers from the various Northern cruising-grounds had made their port, and were refitting; either for home, or for a "between-season" cruise, some in quest of spermaceti in the low latitudes, others among the "ripsacks" in the Californian lagoons.

There was not, throughout the whole fleet, a more promising young man, professionally considered, than Frank Osborn, of Martha's Vineyard, our mate in the Senator. A man of decision and energy, with the courage of a lion; a Hercules in physical build, an Admirable Crichton in his knowledge of all matters pertaining to his calling.

But, added to all these qualities, Mr. Osborn possessed a heart as tender as a girl's; and at the time of which I write, it was tortured with anxiety at the non-arrival of the Casco, in which ship his younger brother filled the station of boatsteerer. She had been whaling near us in the Arctic Sea, and we had last seen her off St. Lawrence Island at the close of the season. She was bound to Oahu, and, as she out-sailed us, we had expected to find her snugly moored in advance of us.

But a fortnight had now elapsed since we anchored; the last stragglers of the fleet were dropping in, one by one, and still no signs of the Casco. Day after day, the anxious brother, as he carried on the duty of the ship, cast wistful glances in the direction of Diamond Hill, hoping to see the well-known vessel heave in sight; at early dawn, and again with the last fading twilight, he swept the sea-horizon with his glass, becoming daily more moody and despondent.

"She has made her port somewhere else, perhaps," said Captain Childs.

"Not at these islands. I have overhauled the Hilo and Lahaina lists; and here's the little schooner, Keoni Ana, arrived this morning, direct from all the windward Islands. Her name isn't in the list."

"Hauled up for San Francisco, maybe,"

suggested the captain. As one who feels it necessary to suggest *something*; though he has no belief in it himself.

"No chance of that, sir," replied Mr. Osborn, with a gloomy shake of the head. "Captain Taber told me himself he should make Honolulu as fast as canvas would drive him. He had two slight cases of the scurvy aboard when we saw him last. She should have been here, on a common chance, when we arrived."

"That's true. She must have gone in somewhere before this time—if no accident has happened to her."

"No sane man, who wished to keep his crew together, would put his ship's head inside of San Francisco, now. And I know that Taber wouldn't be hired to go in there," said the mate.

"Have you heard from Atooi, to leeward, here? She may have touched there, you know."

"No, she hasn't been heard from, there—or hadn't two days ago. There is a bare chance that she may have fallen to leeward of the whole group. Though it's very unlikely that they should have had the trades so very different from what we did."

So, clinging to that last hope, that she had fallen to leeward, and been obliged to keep on, to make a harbor somewhere further south, he dropped the subject for the time. There was no longer any chance of seeing his brother by waiting at Honolulu; and, the Senator being ready for sea, we sailed for a short cruise on the Line.

We pushed our inquiries anxiously, on board every vessel spoken during the cruise. We again visited the Sandwich Islands for our spring outfit and letters from home, meeting there numerous vessels from the various Pacific cruising-grounds, but failed to obtain any tidings of the Casco. She had not been seen or heard from on the California coast; and was universally spoken of as a missing ship. She had gone to the Arctic last season—and had never returned.

The Sea of Okhotsk was our destination in the Senator; and we arrived off the "fifty passage" very early, to find it so blocked with ice that we must necessarily spend a few

days outside. The captain's health had been failing for several months, and he had been advised to give up the command of his vessel and remain at Honolulu for medical treatment. But he had made up his mind, he said, if he must die, to die in harness. He hoped that the change to a colder climate might be beneficial; but it proved the reverse. He sank rapidly after entering the high latitudes, and on the second day after we tacked off shore, Frank Osborn succeeded to the command, by Captain Childs's death.

He had said little about his lost brother since we had left our spring port. He seemed to have fully made up his mind that he should never again hear from John, and to have resigned himself to the inevitable. Something of his old gayety was gone; he was not as boisterous in his merry moods among his brother officers; but he was still Frank Osborn, a little sobered down.

The remains of our late commander were launched into their ocean-grave with all due honor and respect. Services were read by Mr. Osborn himself, the ship lying hove to with the ensign at half-mast, as usual on such occasions, and the cool Arctic air fanning our heads, as we stood, uncovered, round the corpse on the main-deck. When all was over, the crew were mustered at the mainmast, by order of the new captain.

"Boys," said he, in tones which indicated no hesitation or disidence in view of his new position, "you understand, of course, that I command the ship. The voyage will be followed up, the same as if Captain Childs had lived, and I trust to you all to do your duty and help me to make it a successful one. But I shall change our course, so far as this season's work is concerned. I shall make the cruise somewhere outside, instead of going into the Okhotsk. Brace full, Mr. Hudson, and down tacks!" And, leaving the sterile bluffs of Marikan Island, with the ice-bound strait, on our quarter, we bounded on our north-easterly course up the Sea of Kamtschatka.

Little cared we, in the forecastle, about this change of programme. The chance of success was as good, for aught we knew, on one ground as the other, and we had no fear that our young chief would neglect the interests of the voyage. But we did not fail, as we canvassed the subject that night in full conclave, to attribute his course to a lingering hope of learning something about the fate of the Casco and his young brother.

"I tell you, lads," said old Sam Decker, "the old man has never been able to give the boy up yet."

The commanding officer would have been spoken of as "the old man," even though he had been but a child in years. As, in this case he was, comparatively speaking; for Decker was quite old enough to have been his father.

"Not that I think he'll go on any wild-goose chase after him," he continued. "He'll attend to his business, trying to fill the ship. But I think he has a kind of wild idee that the Casco may be making a kind of Flying Dutchman of herself somewhere between the Arctic and the Fox Islands."

"That's far enough to veer and haul upon," growled Jobson the shipkeeper. "No good'll ever come of chasing plant'm-ships. It's bad enough to have 'em come in sight of ye, when ye can't help it."

"O, dry up with your phantoms! that's all my eye and moonshine!" put in Dave Greely, a matter-of-fact Yankee from down east. "There's no more Flying Dutchmen racing round this sea, or any other sea, than there is bog-trotting Irishmen. A ship's always a ship."

"Ay, lad, but a phant'm isn't," was the dogmatical retort.

Greely muttered something about "yarns for marines," only the last word being overheard by the shipkeeper.

"Marines, eh?" he burst out, indignantly. "You'd ought to know better than to use the word to an old shipmate. Hows'ever, you can't expect much manners from a chap with only one voyage exper'ence. You're giving your 'pinion about 'this sea, or any other sea—' you've never doubled Good Hope, I take it, have you?"

"No," answered Dave. "I can't say that I have, yet."

"I thought not," answered the other, dryly, seeming to indicate that that clinched the whole argument. "Hows'ever," he resumed, after an oracular pause, "Mr. Osborn—I beg his pardon, the old man—is a whole-souled fellow, and a rare seaman for his years. And that goes a great ways. We ought to be quite willing to follow where he leads."

Thus Jobson took credit to himself for magnanimity, while simply making a virtue of necessity. For the young captain was not likely to be much influenced by his opinion or that of any other subordinate. He had taken entire command of the ship.

We made the snowy crags of Behring's Island, and stood in so near that we thought we were going to land. But suddenly the captain appeared to have changed his mind, as if he thought it only a waste of time. Again we swung her off and ran to the eastward across Behring's Sea, till we fell in with right-whales in vast numbers and went to work with a will.

We had pretty good luck in taking oil, though we had much fog and not a little rugged weather to contend with. But I noticed that the ship was always kept on the southern tack whenever it was possible to do so; so that we gradually worked towards the land. For we were on the ground that lies directly north of the Aleutian Chain, or as we usually called them, Fox Islands. Still we found the whales plenty and made the most of clear weather. Captain Osborn was much preoccupied in mind, and appeared anxious to run in still nearer the land. But he never neglected his duty to his owners, and no lance in our light flotilla of boats did more execution than his own.

We had lain, wrapped in fog, for three days, without seeing so much as a patch of blue sky, though we did not mind it much, as we were busily employed in securing the spoils we had captured during the last open weather. We had got into thirty fathoms of water, with whirling eddies or tide-rips about us, when the fog partially cleared and we found ourselves within two miles of the land, a rugged pile of volcanic upheavings, looking dreary and barren enough.

"Younaska!" exclaimed Captain Osborn, at the first glance. "See! here's the passage we went through, bound in from the Arctic, last fall." Then he added, in a lower tone, while a shade went across his fine face, "It's just about where the Caseo would have come through, too, as she must have had about the same winds."

As there was but little wind stirring, and the currents were uncertain and treacherous, the anchors were made ready for letting go. We knew not how soon the fog might shut down again; in which case we could be guided only by the depth of water, and by our sense of hearing if in the vicinity of breakers.

This chain of islands forms a dangerous barricade across the North Pacific, extending more than half the distance between the two continents. The passages through the chain are numerous, and comparatively safe in clear weather. But ships are often under the

necessity of running blind, uncertain as to what particular channel they may be navigating.

But we were not driven to the necessity of anchoring, for a breeze sprang up, which dispersed the mist, and gave us a view of the other island forming the west side of the passage. We stretched across towards it, and approaching within a mile of the shore, coasted it along with a leading wind.

"If we had three or four more whales, now," said Mr. Hudson, "our voyage would be made; and what a time this would be to run through! We shall never have a better one—What's that, sir? A flagstaff?"

He was pointing, as he spoke, to the top of a crag, apparently inaccessible to any living thing but a goat or a sea-bird.

"'Tis a pole of some sort, and something flying from it," said the second officer. "Human hands must have raised it there. Most likely some Russians that come here sealing."

Captain Osborn had as yet said nothing, but was surveying it intently through an opera spy-glass, a short, double affair, very convenient for use at the mast-head or in rugged weather. He spoke at last, with a new light in his countenance, such as had not been seen there for months.

"No Russian planted that! There's a piece of an American flag flying. Let her come to, Mr. Hudson, head off shore, and lower away my boat!"

So impatient was he that we were clear of the ship and pulling with all our might, ere she had fairly stopped her headway. We made directly for the spot that looked most favorable for landing; and having succeeded in doing so, had still a tiresome jaunt before us, climbing over rocks which looked as if an army of Titans had been employed to throw them into heaps. There were no traces to indicate the recent presence of man on the shelf where we had landed. A few bleached bones of seals and other still larger *amphibia* were found, which might have belonged to animals slaughtered the year before. By advancing inland a little, we found it possible to ascend the cliff which had shown us nothing but a precipitous wall on its sea-face. And after a toilsome struggle, we stood, fatigued and blown, upon the summit of the pinnacle, with the strips of bunting flying over our heads—tattered remnants of our own country's ensign.

The staff, which had, beyond question, done duty as a whale-boat's mast, was planted

in a crevice between two great boulders of rock, and further secured upright by lashings. It was the most conspicuous spot on the island for raising a signal, to attract the notice of passing vessels.

Wedged firmly in a crevice, edgewise, was a piece of cedar board, such as every whaler has, for repairing boats. The captain jerked it eagerly up to the light, and revealed an inscription in black paint:

"Ship Casco, of New Bedford, wrecked Sept. 27th, 185-<sup>o</sup>. 14 men saved. Seek the crew at the foot of the cliff on the south side of the island."

He turned his face to the southward, and looked over the waste of volcanic rocks, pile beyond pile, stretching away inland. To cross the island by that route would be a formidable undertaking, if indeed it could be done at all. Besides, we could be of little service when we arrived there, unless the ship were placed in communication with us.

"Back! Back to the boat!" he cried, leaping from crag to crag in his mad haste, as he led the way, down the dizzy descent.

Inspired by his example, we were not long in regaining our ship. The impatient brother could not think of waiting for another day to commence operations. The weather, for once, was clear; the nights were short in that latitude; and darkness settled down upon the Senator, heading boldly into the passage. No one left the deck that night until our anchor was let go, at two hours after midnight, when the broad Pacific lay open before us to the southward. No more could be done until daylight.

As soon as the outlines of the land became once more distinct, we were again under sail, running down the southern coast. The scene of the winter-residence of the castaways opened to view within an hour afterwards.

A rude shanty, framed with wreck-lumber, and covered with skins of seals and sea-lions, stood near the beach, sheltered from the icy north winds by a precipitous cliff which rose behind it. The site was just sufficiently removed from this sheltering wall to avoid the dangers and inconveniences that might arise from heavy snowdrifts.

Another staff, with no vestige of a flag remaining, stood close by the house, and several casks were standing or lying, here and there, by the water side. But no human being appeared to welcome us; and, on landing, we found the place deserted. Over the door of

the shanty was another piece of board fastened up, on which we read:

"Five survivors of the crew of ship Casco, wrecked in September last, left this spot, which has been our winter-quarters, June 9th, in a leaky whale-boat. The graves of nine of our shipmates, who have died during the winter will be found behind the house at the foot of the cliff. We shall try to reach Onalashka, hoping to find human beings there, or meet with some vessel—Aaron West, 1st officer—Daniel Mills—John Osborn—Richard Burns—Manuel De Souza."

June 9th, only two weeks ago! And the captain's brother was there alive! Of course he did not give us much time to linger here, after learning this. Our observations were but hurried ones. No record of their proceedings was found; if any existed, they had taken it with them. The story of their terrible winter's experience was, most likely, unwritten. But each reflective mind could supply, in its own way, the dreadful details.

We hurried on board, leaving all as we had found it, and lost no time in resuming the prosecution of our search, which had now, at least, a definite object. The captain was still further stimulated to exertion by the certainty that his brother was so recently alive. He reasoned that the castaways would keep on the south side of the islands, as most likely to fall in with human habitations by so doing; and the ship's course was shaped accordingly.

Three days had elapsed, and, again fog-bound, we lay under short canvas, finding ourselves within a few miles of Onalashka. The captain walked his narrow limits, chafing at the fatality which seemed to attend his efforts, for he was powerless, as to making any further search, until a change of weather.

Suddenly, the ship, forging slowly through the water, met something on the bluff of her bow with a slight shock. There could be no floating ice here at that season; and, astonished, we all ran to the side, to behold a boat sunk level with the water; only the stern and stern-post rising above the surface. She was vibrating and dancing about from the effect of the blow, which had merely pushed her aside, out of our path.

She was soon secured and hauled alongside, when it was found that she had sunk in consequence of a lap having started off, in one of her lower streaks, from the nails rusting out. There were no oars, no loose matters—everything had floated away; but under the stern

was a magazine of provisions, in the shape of pieces of seal's flesh, closely packed; and the name "Casco" was branded in the logger-head, putting her identity beyond question.

Here, then, was an end to the hopes which had, until now, buoyed the captain up. Their boat, shattered and "nail-crazy," had sunk from under them, and they had miserably perished. There could be no other conclusion from what we saw before us.

We took the wreck on board, and with sad hearts, returned to our cruising ground. Our old success was continued to us, and we turned our faces southward in September, with a full ship. But the captain never mentioned his lost brother, or in any way referred to the subject. It seemed even to have passed out of his thoughts, and to have become a part of the dead past.

We had traversed more than a hundred degrees of latitude on our homeward route, and were nearing Cape Horn with a crackling breeze and all sail set, when a ship, outward bound, was reported in sight, almost directly in our track. As we neared her, we recognized her as the Congaree. She was struggling gallantly under double-reefed topsails, but with little prospect of rounding the cape without a change of wind.

Up went her ensign when we had approached within a mile; as if they had just made us out, and wished to communicate.

"I can't stop to speak him now," said the captain. "If he has letters for us I should like to get them; but I can't shorten sail to lose the breeze. If it holds, we shall be in the Atlantic to-night."

The ensign of the outward bounder was run down—then up, and down again—as if there were some special reason for wishing to speak with us.

"What in the world can he want?" the captain muttered, in a fretful, impatient tone. "His business must be very urgent, to want to make me heave to, now."

Down went the flag, as if they had given up their point entirely. But as we were nearly astern of her, it was hoisted again—up! down! Such an appeal was not to be resisted by any seaman with a heart in his bosom—certainly not by Frank Osborn. In came our studding-sails; but we had run too far on our course to speak her, and were obliged to round to in the lee position.

"He's coming to us, sir," said Mr. Hudson, as our mizzen topsail swung in aback, the light sails slatting in the stiff breeze, for we had

had no time, as yet, to furl them. "There's his boat, lowering away."

"Captain Munroe! What does your flag of distress mean? What can I do for you?" inquired our commander, who had recognized the other while he was climbing the man-ropes.

"O, I only set that to make you heave to," was the answer. "You'll forgive me for it, I know. Let me introduce my second officer—Mr. Osborn."

"Frank!" cried the young man, who had followed his captain up the side, and now leaped into his brother's outstretched arms.

"John!"

I know of no sight more affecting than a strong man in tears. Our captain was not a man to be ashamed of his emotion; and, as he strained the younger seaman to his heart, many bronzed cheeks among the lookers-on were wet, from sympathy. It soon found vent in the orthodox way, as understood among seamen and soldiers.

"Three cheers for the old man and his brother!" said old Sam Decker, huskily, with a big tear standing in each eye.

The mystery of John Osborn's apparent resurrection was soon explained. The five survivors of the Casco, after several days of suffering, exhausted with the constant labor necessary to keep their frail craft afloat, were rescued by a party of Aleutians, who were out from Onalashka in a *baydar* or skin canoe. Their shattered boat was on the point of sinking when they were taken from her. Though the land was in sight, they were many miles from it, and it was hardly possible they could have lived to reach it.

But they had fallen into good hands, and, after recruiting their strength for a few days, took passage in a small Russian vessel for Sitka, whence they soon reached San Francisco. John fell in with old acquaintances there, who supplied him with the means for a quick passage home by the Isthmus route.

Nothing daunted by his perils, he was again embarked on a similar voyage. A happy hour was spent by the brothers, and they parted, perhaps not to meet again for many years. But that was looked upon as a mere matter of course by the seamen of the Vineyard and Nantucket. Where several sons of one family pursue the same adventurous calling, a separation of ten, fifteen or even twenty years is nothing uncommon—broken, perhaps, once or twice, by a casual encounter on the great ocean highway.

# FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

Galen, Paul

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Oct 1870; 32, 4; American Periodicals*  
pg. 346

## FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

BY PAUL GALEN.

FATE sometimes works strange mysteries. At least so singularly do some events intertwine themselves with each other, so inexplicably do some natures meet and influence one another, for evil or for good, that one is fain to believe in fate, and loth to ascribe the tangled skein of circumstances to mere chance.

Sydney Bruce and Maude Forrest were a remarkable couple. So all observers said, and there were many observers, and shrewd ones, too, at Newport at the time Mr. Bruce and Miss Forrest made their advent. The season was particularly gay. There was a most dazzling array of beautiful belles, enveloped in all the paraphernalia which the ingenuity of fashion could suggest, attended by elegant young men, and set off by the rich background of superb matrons and stately fathers. There was music, dancing, riding, boating, bathing and all the etceteras.

Sydney Bruce was one of the highest types of the elegant young American of the day. Rather tall, well proportioned, with an intelligent face, black curly mustache and dark eyes, wavy hair brushed back from an intellectual brow, and with a dignified and graceful carriage, he only wanted money and the necessary amount of suavity to make him

one of the lions. And such he was, for he lacked in none of the requisites.

But an acute physiognomist would have seen a look about the eyes suggestive of a possibility of something that did not appear on the surface—a latent power of evil that needed but to be aroused to make itself felt. What was there in Sydney Bruce's disposition that caused this vague look of threatening danger? Surely nothing that had yet been called out, for his friends were many, and none knew evil of him. His money, his talent, and his agreeable manners attracted all towards him.

He met Maude Forrest when he had been at Newport three days. He thought first that she was beauty incarnate, then that she was the very embodiment of pride. She was a tall fair-faced blond, with great masses of wavy yellow hair that enveloped her classic head like a spray of gold. Her eyes were large, of a deep blue, her mouth was perfect in form, and as mobile in its expressiveness as a poet's heart. Her chin and nose might have been cut with Angelo's chisel, and her skin was like alabaster, mixed with the most delicate pink tints of the seashell. In form she was simply magnificent, and her carriage might have been that of a queen in its state-

illness. But one could see at a glance that she possessed indomitable pride, and a thoughtful observer could easily imagine that, although her soul was capable of the most tender emotions, she was capable of crushing all with her pride, and stifling the most yearning promptings of her heart, should occasion demand it.

It is not to be wondered that Sydney Bruce and Maude Forrest, having once met, should be attracted towards each other. But why should they have been thrown together? Why should those two intense and highly individualized natures have met and wrought the chain of events that it is my purpose now to relate? I puzzle my brain in vain for an answer, and repeat that fate sometimes works strange mysteries.

Mr. Bruce and Miss Forrest were promenading the long piazza one evening. Said he:

"Does this buzz and whirl of fashion, with which we are surrounded and with which we mingle, please you, Miss Forrest?"

"It pleases me very much. I take a great deal of delight in it."

This reply was rather baffling to Bruce, who had intended to elicit a very different reply from his companion. But he persevered:

"O, there is undoubtedly a certain kind of pleasure about it, but do you find it satisfying?"

"Satisfying? Yes. The excitement is what I crave."

"Ah! but is it not a false excitement that arouses the mind and nerves it into an unnatural play?"

"No sir; I do not think so. If I did, I should not be here. It is a life that I love—for a little while. Of course, I get enough of it in a few weeks, and then I am ready to settle down in my home again."

Bruce did not reply at the instant.

"You need not try," she continued, "to draw forth any mock sentimentality from me. You may think me giddy-headed, if you please, but I am not going to deny that I thoroughly enjoy the fashionable follies of this life here."

"You call it folly, and yet you say that you enjoy it?"

"I say so, and I say it boldly," she said, laughing. "And so do you."

"Do I?"

"Certainly. Have you found no pleasure since you have been here—met with nothing that was really attractive to you?"

"O, indeed I have!" he replied, quickly,

looking into her face with an unmistakable meaning.

She drew herself up and blushed slightly.

"I was not soliciting a compliment, Mr. Bruce," she said, with dignity.

"I beg that you will not imagine that I suspected you of such a thing." And she looked up to see if he was sincere. There was no mistaking his sincerity, as he added, gravely:

"It was not a mere compliment. I meant what I said."

For once Maude Forrest was at a loss for something to say, and her dignity, for the time being, was unavailable. She was silent for some moments. At last she said:

"Let us go into the parlor, Mr. Bruce, and join the others." In with the gay throng they mingled, and, being together more or less, attracted universal attention and whispered comments.

"What a grand couple!" was frequently heard on all sides.

For the next few hours the "grand couple" were together frequently, and it would seem that they enjoyed each other's society greatly. It was evident that they were congenial spirits.

But Sydney Bruce's mind was a perplexity to himself. Evenings, when he was alone, meditating, his thoughts would run thus:

"It is strange how I feel towards her. Of her beauty there is no question, and her accomplishments are of the highest. She is wonderfully attractive, too, and sometimes I am on the point of falling madly in love with her. But then comes the thought—guard yourself, but do not lose sight of her. And a feeling of hate comes over me, and I seem to be capable of doing her almost any cruelty. She would make a grand wife, and do credit to any man's home. She is terribly proud, but perhaps no more so than myself. Her smiles seem to lure me on, and a mysterious voice seems to whisper me to follow—but for what purpose? Good heavens! I find myself almost loving her and cursing her at the same instant!"

And then he would take a brisk walk to drive the subject from him, and the next day renew his attentions with more assiduity than ever.

Maude herself began to receive him with a dignified cordiality, although her manner never overstepped certain bounds. Hers was a nature whose respect and friendship must first be won, and then—as for love, it was a

matter for the most profound consideration. There was no danger of her losing her heart hastily. She was too experienced and self-guarded for that.

One day her mother, who was the source from whom Maude had drawn all her loveliness and pride, summoned her to her presence. Maude wondered what was coming, for the manner of the summons was unusual, and her mother was grave, yet seemed to be filled with suppressed excitement.

"Sit down, Maude."

Maude obeyed. Mrs. Forrest, after a pause, during which she seemed to be agitated by strong emotions, said:

"My daughter, you know that our family has always been distinguished for pride, and a rigid care in guarding its dignity and honor."

"I know it," said Maude.

"Do you think you are behind the rest of us in that quality?"

"I hope not," replied Maude, with a slight compression of the lips.

"Could you sacrifice something to avenge an insult?"

"Indeed I could. But why do you ask such a question? Have we been insulted?"

"Never mind now. I see you are with Sydney Bruce a great deal."

"Well," replied Maude, coloring, "do you not approve of that?"

"I cannot tell yet," said her mother, looking at her searchingly. "You do not love him?"

"Love him! Scarcely, as yet, I hope."

"You never must!"

"Do explain your strange words, mother. What is the matter? Is not Sydney Bruce what he should be?"

"I know nothing against him."

"Then why do you talk so? What would you have me do?"

"Guard your heart, Maude," said Mrs. Forrest, impressively, bending forward, "and, when the proper time comes, *humble him!*"

"Good heavens, mother! how strangely you act and talk," said Maude. "Mr. Bruce is a gentleman. Why should I humble him? and how am I to do it? He is as proud as we are."

"Listen, Maude. Your mother was humbled, brought down into the very dust, once, by Sydney Bruce's father. He was young, and I was young, and I—yes, there is no use in denying it—I loved him. And I fondly believed he loved me. For months we went together and revelled in the sweetest of all

dreams of youth, that of a pure and perfect love. It came to be understood that we were to be married, and every one congratulated us on our engagement. We were both of good family and our tastes were congenial. Everything was going on smoothly, and the future seemed one bright vision of happiness, when one day came a stinging, bitter, accusing letter, taunting me with being false, and bidding me a cruel, unregretful farewell. From that day afterwards I never saw Morris Bruce. The false villain! His charges were made up in his own wicked mind, and his heart never felt the first shadow of love towards me. Not one regretful word in the letter, not one moment given for refutation of what he pretended to have heard, not one sentiment that could have been uttered by one who loved another. He left me to face the world and explain as best I could his absence. O, how humbled I was! The curiosity of acquaintances and gossips must be satisfied, and I was the butt of all their speculation and ridicule. You do not know what a revulsion in my heart was produced. My love changed to hate; everything tender within me was hardened and seared over, and I became vindictive and revengeful. If it had not been for my pride, I would have pined away and died, I think, but as it was, I put on a bold face, recovered my accustomed gayety, and stood before the world, at least, light-hearted and free as I was before I had ever seen Morris Bruce. In the course of a few years I married Lothrop Forrest, your father. It was not for love, for I was no longer capable of such a feeling. But he was rich, and my ambition was to marry well, and thus maintain my pride and baffle my enemies. When you were four years old, your father died. He left a handsome competence, and you know the style we have lived in. You are handsome and accomplished, and can attract any one you choose towards you. You can win the admiration of the proudest man that walks, and if you try you can win his love.

"And now it is for you, if you will, to satisfy the restless craving that has for so many years been gnawing at my heart. It is for you to avenge the insult and wrong that was imposed on your mother. Can you repress all tender feelings, crush down your love, and *break Sydney Bruce's heart?*"

Mrs. Forrest's face was flushed, her eyes glowed with an intense excitement, and she bent forward towards Maude, with an eager

appealing look, as she put the question to her. Maude looked vacantly out of the window and pondered in her own secret soul for some moments. She put the question to herself: "Do I love Sydney Bruce?" Tremblingly she weighed it in the balance of her heart, and answered, "No." Then she turned to her mother with a cold look and said:

"If all you tell me is true, if there are no palliating circumstances, I consent to act as your tool!"

"All I have stated is true. Morris Bruce's accusations were utterly without foundation. He wounded me and humbled me out of the malignancy of his own heart. O, it would kill me to see you marry his son; it would be the most exquisite joy to see you bring him down!"

"That is enough," replied Maude. "Now let me go and think."

Thus the compact was sealed, and the wounded heart, turned to stone by its terrible experience, exulted in an unnatural joy.

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Sydney Bruce was accustomed to go to New York occasionally during his stay at Newport, to look over business affairs that demanded his attention. He rarely remained on these occasions more than one day, and never more than two. It so happened that during the very conversation just related as having passed between Maude Forrest and her mother, he started on one of these brief journeys.

Having transacted his business, he sat in his room in the evening, with a few idle hours before him. He reclined in his chair, smoking and thinking of Maude Forrest. "She is certainly a most lovely girl," ran his thoughts, "but—ah! there's the rub." And he mused profoundly.

At last with a sudden impulse he turned to his private desk, opened it, and drew forth some ancient looking documents. They were papers left by his father, who had died some ten years before, which he had never yet examined thoroughly. He had handled them over a number of times, but there were many that had not been unfolded. Opening an old diary, a few sentences caught his eye, and he began to grow interested.

"Hum!" he muttered. "I did not know that my father was ever concerned in a love scrape."

And then he read the story of Morris Bruce's acquaintance with one Lydia Merton, how they loved, became engaged, and how

finally indubitable evidence reached him concerning falseness on her part. The diary ran thus:

"June 2.—It cannot be doubted. She is falsity itself. O, that I should have been deceived by her! But she shall pay for her sin. She shall know that I am not to be trifled with.

"June 3.—I have written her such a letter as she will remember all the days of her life. I shall leave to-morrow, never to look on her face again. Curses on her and hers. May she never know what happiness is in this life. May her children be miserable, and be deceived as I have been. Let all that belongs to her and me be separated forever. Good-by, love, and welcome hate to my anguished bosom!"

Then there were memoranda of a long journey, interspersed with many bitter reflections. One sentence, evidently written in a moment of great bitterness, read:

"May my children live to make her children miserable."

"By George!" he muttered, "the governor took it to heart, didn't he? Very much as I should do, I think, if a woman should play me false."

He looked further, but discovered no other entries relating to the subject. Then he pulled forth a quantity of folded slips of paper with which the pocket in the diary was stuffed. A scrap cut from a newspaper caught his eye, which read thus:

"MARRIED.—On the 31st of August, 1835, by the Rev. Stephen Blossom, Miss Lydia Merton to Mr. Lothrop Forrest."

His heart gave a great bound as he read this. His brain took a rapid train of thought.

"Can it be possible!" he exclaimed. "It would be a most strange coincidence. Can this lovely girl be the daughter of that false woman? And is it enjoined upon me to make her miserable?"

He read no more, but gathered up all the papers, placed them in the desk, and locked it.

"I'll dream on this," he thought, "and in the morning I'll find out whether this Mrs. Forrest is the wife of Mr. Lothrop Forrest."

Next day he started for Newport again, having gained the information he desired. His suspicion was confirmed. "What is to be the result?" was his constant thought during the journey. It seemed like a baleful omen—this girl being thrown across his path,

she so lovely, and proud, and beautiful, and yet the daughter of his father's greatest enemy. "Of course, it is out of the question for me to ever marry her now, but what *might* have happened if I had not happened to stumble across those documents?" He asked himself this question, and longed, yet dreaded, to meet her again. But by the time he reached Newport his mind was made up. He would sound her, make her intimate acquaintance, draw her out, make a little love to her if necessary, and find out if she were like what he judged her mother must be.

He had been two days at Newport before he saw Maude Forrest. Then she came down in the forenoon, in a morning wrapper, looking pale and interesting. He hastened to meet her.

"Is it possible that you have been ill, Miss Forrest?" he asked, in a tone of genuine interest. "I have missed you since my return from New York, but had no idea anything so serious was the matter."

"Ah," she said, smiling, "it is pleasant to be remembered by one's friends. It has been nothing very serious. Only a slight indisposition. When did you return?"

"Day before yesterday," was the reply, as he wondered at her sudden unbending in calling him "friend." "Have you entirely recovered?"

"O yes, I think so," she replied, in a slightly weak voice, corresponding well with her pale countenance and slightly subdued manner. It became her wonderfully well—that subdued manner—and Sydney Bruce looked on her, almost fascinated, as he wondered whether it were caused by her illness or by his presence. He did not flatter himself that the latter was the case, although it was a pleasant fancy, and he dwelt on it in his own mind as he looked at her with his dark magnetic eyes. Her lids drooped under his gaze, and when they were raised again she looked far out on the sea with a dreamy expression, and for the moment both almost forgot to resist their hearts. Would it have been better then for true love to have taken its course, and they two to have followed on, over the rough and smooth places, hand in hand, journeying through life together? Who shall answer?

At that moment Mrs. Forrest appeared, sailing toward them in all the majesty of her splendid beauty, her proud bearing and her regal robes. Her presence brought the young people to their senses again. Both were im-

mediately on their guard, each fondly imagining the other to be deluded. What a war for two young hearts! Each trying to probe the other under the guise of simulated blandishments, and honeyed words and manner. Mrs. Forrest cast a sweeping, searching, satisfied look at them. Mr. Bruce immediately rose to greet her.

"I hope I find Mrs. Forrest in good health," he said.

"I am quite well, I assure you," she replied. "And you?"

"In the best of health and spirits," he replied. "I have been pained to learn of your daughter's indisposition."

"Yes, Maude has been suffering with a severe headache for two days past, but she is now entirely well, I believe. I hope your visit to New York was pleasant."

"O yes," he replied, "as pleasant as a return to business this season can be. This is a time when I like to forget care, and devote myself to pleasure."

"Yes. But pleasure cannot exist unmixed in this world."

"Alas! everyday experience tells us all that. Perhaps it is better so. By the way, Mrs. Forrest, has New York been your residence long?"

"Only three years."

"You never could have met my father, then, who, I imagine in his younger days, must have flourished in society about the same time that you did."

She looked up quickly and searched his countenance. Her heart beat violently as she wondered whether any hidden meaning lay beneath his words. But she had met as consummate an actor as herself, and his question seemed to be the sudden prompting of the moment. How should she reply? There was no time for deliberation, and so she said:

"Your father? Let me see. It seems to me that I remember the name of Bruce."

"Mr. Morris Bruce—that was his name."

"Yes, I think I did have the pleasure of knowing him long ago. It was when our family resided in New York. Afterwards we moved to Philadelphia, and only three years ago again returned to New York. I consider it the preferable city of the two to live in. Don't you?"

"Yes indeed." But he was not going to allow her to change the subject, and said, "Is your memory of him distinct? I should very much like to hear him described as he looked

in his younger days to an acquaintance." He knew he was tantalizing her, but she could detect nothing beyond a passing interest in his luminous eyes. "Can he know?" she thought, and she trembled inwardly. She was in his power, however, if she would have her plan succeed, and hesitation would be fatal.

"Indeed, it is so long since I knew him," she said, laughing, "that my memory cannot be very accurate. I should think he looked very much like you. He was tall, erect, with just such eyes as yours, and a proud bearing. This much I remember, and very little more."

"She is acting," thought Sydney, as he marked her assumed light manner and forced indifference. He forbore to pursue the subject further, and turned to Maude.

"This bracing sea-breeze ought to revive you, Miss Forrest."

"O, it does, wonderfully."

He looked at her gravely, and her manner betokened meek pleasure at his solicitude in her behalf.

"If agreeable to your inclinations, I should be pleased to call on you for a ride this evening, Miss Forrest," he said.

"It would afford me great pleasure," she replied, bowing.

He then bid the mother and daughter good-morning, and departed, leaving them to consult over the progress thus far made in their scheme of love-making and heart-breaking, while he himself meditated on the girl and his acquaintance with her.

"At any rate, I have let the mother know who I am," he thought. "She is fully aware that I am the son of the man whom she cheated. I couldn't study her face when I questioned her, or she would have immediately suspected that I knew of her past history. But her voice was steady and her words as smooth as honey. Perhaps she intends that the daughter shall now cheat me. They are both of them hard to understand, and I half believe them to be capable of anything heartless. But they will find their match in me. I shall guard my feelings well, flirt with the lovely Maude for a while, and then draw off, I guess. But by Jove! if it were not for what I discovered the other night, I might be inclined to fall earnestly in love with her. She is magnificent! However, that is out of the question, and if I make her believe I am in earnest, the disappointment will do her no harm, if she inherits many of her mother's qualities. And

it is said that the sins of the parents are visited upon the children—so I will only be fulfilling scripture." He smiled at this thought—a smile in which frivolity, deviltry and perplexity were quaintly mingled.

The days went on, and Maude Forrest and Sydney Bruce were seen together at all hours. They came to be one of the standard subjects of conversation among the denizens of the place. Every one said that they were a remarkable couple. To all appearances they were rapidly travelling the road which led to what society calls a "splendid match."

Three or four weeks passed, and one evening Maude and her mother sat in their room.

"The game progresses finely, does it not, Maude?" said Mrs. Forrest.

"Yes," said Maude, wearily. "But has it never occurred to you, mother, that when the end comes I may be compromised in some way?"

"There is no danger of that," was the quick reply. "I understand how to manage it. It will only be looked upon as a watering-place flirtation. Some people may call you heartless, but you will not mind that."

"No. I will not mind it if that is all they say."

"They can say no more."

"I will be glad when it is all over. I am tired."

"It must be pushed to the end now."

"Yes, I understand that. But O, how shameful it is to trifle with sacred feelings, and give one's self up to such a heartless game!"

"Maude! what do you mean?"

"I mean that you are cruel!" was the passionate reply. "You cannot have a very high regard for me, to use me so like a tool, and make me forget all my self-respect. You have me act a living lie! Why did you not fight your own battles?" This was asked almost fiercely.

Mrs. Forrest was alarmed, but she said, sternly and coldly, "Maude, I should think you would be above such exhibitions."

"How can you think me above anything, after putting me to such base uses as you have?"

Mrs. Forrest was wily and artful, and fruitful of resource in emergencies. She saw that a decided step must be taken in Maude's present state of mind, else the daughter, willful at times as perversity itself, would rebel and throw confusion in all her plans. The alarming thought flashed into her mind

that Maude was beginning to love Sydney Bruce, and would say yes, instead of no, when an all important question should be asked. So she grew cautious and gentle, and spoke soothing words. She called up her own sorrows, made Maude pity her, and finally worked upon her pride.

"It cannot be much longer before he will come to the mark," she said. "And now listen to me. Sydney Bruce looks wonderfully like his father. Not merely in resemblance of feature and form, but the same expression creeps out, the same evil look is in his eyes. You must draw him on faster, and hasten his downfall. If you do not, he will humble you. He will be longer about it, he will seek to induce you to become his affianced. If he should succeed in it he would be all tenderness and affection for a while, and then he would cast you off. Do not ask me how I know; I know it, and that is enough. It is in him. He is false-hearted. He cannot change his nature. His vanity, if nothing else, would lead him to seek your smiles and court your love. It might lead him to marry you if he were poor, but he is rich, and cares nothing for money. He is incapable of caring for a loving heart—he would delight in breaking one. But it must be the other way. You must bring him down and mortify him. There is no help for it, no retreating now. You have promised me, remember—"

"There! there! don't talk any longer. Who said anything about retreating? I gave you my promise, and it shall be kept. You will make me crazy!"

"Only a word more. Do not falter. Call up your pride and spirit, think of the past, and the consciousness of having resented an insult will be your reward. Come with me now, Maude, and let us take a walk in the cool of the evening."

"No, I prefer to remain here."

"Very well, my dear, but don't brood over our matters. Or, if you do think about them, remember that you are doing your mother a great service, that you are gratifying one who has always watched over you with tender care, and whose love will last forever, in spite of anything that can happen on earth. We are mother and daughter, and should never let anything come between us."

She stole softly out of the room, having thus poured gall and honey into her daughter's breast.

Still the game went on for the slaughter of

a heart, and still that heart was on its guard, though unconscious of the plot against it. Before the world, the course of true love was running very smooth, and for once, the ancient proverb seemed about to be disapproved. The third day after the conversation last narrated, Mr. Bruce and Miss Forrest, just as the shades of evening were gathering, took a stroll by the beach. They sauntered arm in arm, a long distance from where the gay throng was gathered, and soon came beneath the shade of a huge cliff. Rocks were all about them. Over them hung a huge boulder, and in front of them the sea dashed in an angry white foam, over rough and jagged points. Far out a few white sails could be indistinctly seen, and from the wide expanse of blue water came a cool breeze, brushing across the bared head of Bruce, and waving the golden locks of Maude. O, they should have been true lovers, standing there and looking out upon the sea—not false, and scheming, and each watchful of the other! After a pause, Sydney Bruce said:

"Miss Maude, we have spent many pleasant hours together in this place."

"Yes, we have, indeed."

"I linger over them, and dread to have them cease, for it may never be our—or at least my lot to enjoy such again."

"Why need you say never again?"

"Because such episodes in one's life only come at rare intervals."

"That is true," she said, absently, as if her words conveyed no expression of her thoughts.

Sydney Bruce watched her narrowly, and, feeling his way came nearer and nearer the dangerous ground. "I have cherished hopes," he said, "within the last few weeks, and dreamed dreams that perhaps were but mad visions of forbidden bliss. My heart has suggested things that my lips dare not speak."

"Indeed!" she said. "May I inquire what was the nature of your strange flight of fancy?"

"Need you inquire?" he asked, suddenly seizing her hand. "Do you feel no responsive throbs in your own heart?" He gazed at her with intense earnestness.

"Really, Mr. Bruce," she said in a constrained tone, "you speak and act in enigmas. If you mean—"

"I mean nothing," he said, releasing her hand as suddenly as he had grasped it. "Now look at me, Miss Forrest, and answer honestly. Have you the slightest idea that we could ever be more than friends?"

She did look at him, and her expression for the moment was one of genuine surprise. No explanation of his behaviour suggested itself to her mind. He looked anything but an abject, appealing lover. And for his part, he was equally astonished at the cool inquiring look she cast upon him. She finally answered him by saying:

"I hope you have never been so deluded as to have such an idea."

A faint smile appeared on the face of both Miss Forrest and Mr. Bruce, as each surveyed the other's coolness.

"It seems that we have both been mistaken in each other to a certain extent," he said.

"Have we?"

"Yes," he said, with a severity that took all lightness from her manner. "Do not deny to me, Miss Forrest, that you have been acting a part."

"And you—what have you been doing?"

"I have been—studying you," he said.

"Under the guise of a lover," she added. "Is not that acting a part?"

"Since we understand each other in a measure now," he said, without replying to her question, "may we not go into further explanations?"

"I do not know that there is anything to explain."

"Reflect a moment, and perhaps you will change that opinion. Do you know anything of your mother's past history?"

"Do you?" she asked, in amazement.

He looked at her steadily. "Shall we exchange confessions?" he asked.

"As you like."

"Well, my father left a diary. I read it."

"My mother told me a story of the past, and gave me a task to perform."

Both were then silent for some moments. Nothing more was needed to reveal them to each other. At last they rose to go, and but little was said on the way to the hotel. But just as they neared their destination Sydney Bruce spoke.

"Miss Maude," he said, in a subdued earnest tone, "all is now over between us. But I don't mind confessing that life is henceforth to have one sweet bitter memory for me." As he spoke her hand trembled on his arm. His voice grew more sad and earnest. "We have accused each other of acting parts, and neither has denied the charge. Tell me, did your mother set you to work to disappoint me?"

"She did," answered Mande, in a quiet tone.

"I thought as much. But honestly, as I stand here, I had no similar intention towards you. I only set out to learn what I could of the daughter of the woman whom my father regarded with great bitterness. From certain injunctions in his diary, I thought I could never marry you, and perhaps I had some thoughts, too, that I would never care to confess. But down there on the beach we came to understand that we must separate. We took it very coolly—we still talk quite indifferently about it, as if it were no source of regret to us that our paths must now diverge. Are we not *acting parts still?* Are we to say good-by with no sorrow in our hearts? Tell me, Maude," and he drew her arm within his more closely, "will there be no regret at this parting after these few days of fleeting bliss? When we go before the world with no shade of sorrow on our faces, will we not still be *acting parts*?"

Maude's frame shook convulsively, and it was with a strong effort that she spoke calmly.

"We must henceforth be nothing to each other. You must go from here, or I must, for it would kill me to see you every day. O, what a lesson I am learning! I thought my pride could carry me over everything. You may kiss me once before you go, and then one last good-by."

He caught her in his arms, kissed her lips fervently, and held her as if he never was going to let her go. At last he released her, conducted her to the passage-way to her mother's room, and there they parted without saying another word.

Maude ran in and flung herself on the bed, burying her face. Her mother rose and spoke, but Maude looked up with flushed cheeks and swollen eyes, exclaiming:

"Not a question! Not a word! It is all over. He will go away. Your high, noble ambition is satisfied! Go and rejoice over it, and leave me to my misery!"

The next day, the little world at Newport was thrown into a buzz of excitement. Sydney Bruce had suddenly left for a voyage to Europe, and Mrs. and Miss Forrest had departed for their home. But the flutter soon ceased, the sensation speedily became stale and gave way to a new one, and the sickle throng forgot the remarkable couple in fresh and more absorbing topics. But the two stricken hearts—what of them?

The lapse of a year usually brings about important changes, and so it was with the personages of our little history.

Mrs. Forrest sat in her elegantly furnished room, absorbed in thought. Two subjects agitated her mind. One was a scene in the library where her daughter Maude and Colonel Wharton were. She felt sure that the colonel would propose that evening, and she was extremely anxious that Maude should give a favorable reply.

The other matter with which her thoughts were occupied was a forthcoming interview with one whom she expected to call soon.

Yesterday she had received the following note:

"NEW YORK, July 6.

"MRS. FORREST:—Would you listen to a story of the past, and have a great wrong righted?"

SYDNEY BRUCE."

This, as might be imagined, woke up old memories, and set her brain in a turmoil. But she sent the following few words in reply:

"July 6.

"MR. BRUCE:—You may come to-morrow evening, but I fear it is too late.

"L. FORREST."

And now she was waiting. What was the story she was to hear? She felt a vague fear, and reproached herself without knowing why.

At last the bell rang, and Sydney Bruce was ushered into her presence. He looked a trifle older, and the lines of his face were a little harder than when she had seen him last. He advanced and said:

"I have come to talk to you first, Mrs. Forrest, of events not within my remembrance, but which were made known to me by an aunt—my father's sister. Would you be set right with one who has passed from this earth, whom you once loved, and who fondly loved you, though you may not think so now? Shall I tell you a story that will make you regretful instead of revengeful?"

She turned pale, but replied, "You may go on and tell me the story."

"I am glad you are willing to hear it," he replied. "It is not very long. It is a story of a base villain who inflicted misery on two young hearts, from a mean, bitter jealousy. He took advantage of certain circumstances, twisted and distorted them to suit his own purpose, and, succeeded in separating a couple who might have lived long and happily together but for his villainous plot. Do you remember the name of Ralph Gray?"

"I do—what of him?" gasped she.

"He sued for your hand once, unsuccessfully."

"He did."

"He circulated the false reports that separated you and Morris Bruce. It was his sweet revenge that you should live to hate instead of love each other."

And Sydney unfolded a tale of wrong and scheming, of a villain's chagrin and his insatiate revenge, of a plot ingenious in its design, and too successful in its execution.

Mrs. Forrest saw all. Morris Bruce had really loved her, but had been driven from her by the representations adroitly conveyed of Ralph Gray, seemingly convicting her, beyond the shadow of a doubt, of the most heartless falsity. She groaned and trembled as the truth was forced upon her mind.

"My aunt learned this," continued Sydney, "after her brother was married, and then she wisely kept it to herself. And she has never mentioned it to a living soul until she told me, a few days ago, when I informed her that I had loved your daughter, and told her the reasons why we could not marry. We will not recall the season at Newport; that is past and should be forgotten. We will let bygones be bygones. But now I love your daughter still—"

"O, do not say that, Mr. Bruce!" exclaimed Mrs. Forrest, covering her face with her hands, and appearing to be greatly agitated.

"Why, Mrs. Forrest!" he asked, in amazement; "you surely will not allow the old objections—"

"No, no, it is not that, but—I will be frank with you, Mr. Bruce. I thank you for telling me the history you have. It will remove a rankling hate from my bosom, and replace there a memory full of love, and a hope in the great future that comes after this life. Again I thank you for it. But—I dread to tell you—Maude is at this moment in the parlor with one Colonel Wharton, and I fear that ere this she has accepted an offer of his hand. He thinks a great deal of her, and I have encouraged her to accept him."

Sydney Bruce's face turned white, and his features settled into a rigid look. "It is indeed too late, then," he muttered. "But is there no hope?"

"I do not know. I fear not."

"Then I had better go," he said, with an expression of profound gloom.

But hark! A step is heard in the hall. Maude's visitor is leaving. Sydney stares

at Mrs. Forrest with an expression of wild hope. The outside door is heard to open and close, and Mrs. Forrest hastens from the room. She meets her daughter.

"Maude, have you given yourself to Colonel Wharton?" she asked, excitedly.

"Not yet," answered Maude, in surprise.

"Thank God! Go into the sitting-room. There is one there whom you wish to see."

Maude, in great wonderment, obeyed.

"Maude!"

"Mr. Bruce!"

"Thank God, my darling, that all occasion for our estrangement is past. You are to be mine, now, if—" and here he looked at her searchingly.

"If what?" she asked, trembling.

"What did you say to Colonel Wharton?"

"I told him to wait a week for an answer."

"How long must I wait?"

"Not long, I guess," she replied, with a smile and a blush, as he took her by the hand and led her to a seat beside him. He

kept her hand in his own, and looked on her with joyful love beaming from every feature. "At last," he murmured, "is my great dream of love to be fulfilled."

"How has it all come about?" she asked.

"It is a long story. Your mother knows it, and she will tell you."

"My mother!"

"Yes. Here she comes. Let her tell us that she blesses us in our perfect love."

"Bless you, my children, and may you be happy. But O, forgive me for the great wrong of a year ago."

"Say nothing about it!" exclaimed Sydney. "Let it be forevermore forgotten. We thank you for your blessing, my future mother; and Maude, let us thank the great Father above that he has vouchsafed to us that we may be all in all to each other, henceforth in this life!"

She clung to him closer, and a silent amen trembled on her lips!

# FROM OVER SEA.

MISS AMANDA M HALE

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Sep 1870; 32, 3; American Periodicals*

pg. 274

## FROM OVER SEA.

BY MISS AMANDA M. HALE.

It was a dream of mine, from my childhood, that my life's blessing or it may be bane, would come to me from over this immeasurable, lonely, purple sea that sang and surged forever before my eyes, forever restless, forever changeful, as richly charged with splendid, exuberant vitality as the young eager heart which beat in my own bosom, and had its seasons of burning passion, and rosy exultation, and wild despair.

And this was why in my early desolation and loneliness I stole away so often from the great house and the uncongenial fireside, and sought out strange eyries among the rocks, and hiding there, let the summer days go by, and fed my dreams by the splendors of the sea and sky, and the music of the waves.

And so in this old fashion I grew up to womanhood, and one day my aunt said in her chilly dignified way:

"You are eighteen now, Vivia, and too old to spend your time idling on the shore as you have done."

She made a pause and I was silent. I knew my frigid, correct, unloving aunt disapproved of me, but I was indifferent. What had she ever done to make my life beautiful to me? After a minute's pause she said, still more sharply:

"This mustn't last much longer—not long after Max comes home."

"Max!"

She did not heed me.

"You will have to entertain him till Lucia comes, I suppose, but then I shall get you a situation somewhere. You know you have no fortune!"

Know it? Had she not told me a hundred times or more, thus taunting me with my obligation to her? So I was going to work for myself. That pleased me. Meanwhile I escaped from my aunt's surveillance as soon as I could, and stole away to one of my favorite haunts to dream about this new life that was coming, and this unknown cousin Max, about whose figure I had woven a world of romances, whom I fancied a paladin of the nineteenth century, and wondered at and worshipped, while in my innocent girlish heart I wished that Heaven had made me such a man as he. For I knew that Max was to marry Lucia Trenholme—at least, my aunt meant that he should, and who ever ventured to controvert her desires?

I sat and watched the white gulls flying overhead and the golden splendor of the sky fade out into misty gray, and never felt the change that was coming over the world till the slow solemn note of the sea dwelt on my ear—and not that alone, but also a weird, mysterious undertone, a wild eerie sob that was always heard at the cliffs before a storm.

"Round Island crying for a storm," the old sea-fairy people.

This cry—like a human creature in desperate plight—always chilled me with a foreboding sense of coming woe, and I got up hastily, and turning, saw a tall knightly figure between me and the light.

"Ah! It is you then, and not a shadow or a wraith, to dissolve in a twinkling. I half expected to see you vanish before my eyes. Do you know I was sent in search of you? A long chase you have led me!" And the fair brow wrinkled up sternly, and did its best to belie the smiling mouth and the luminous eyes.

"I am very sorry," I said, demurely. "But perhaps you were not sent in search of me."

He glanced over me hurriedly, and then smiled as if reassured.

"Are you a mortal maiden?"

"I believe so!"

"And do they call you Vivia Grey?"

"Yes."

"Then I am your cousin Max!" and he reached out his firm white hand to me.

I clasped it and looked up to see what this cousin might be like, half afraid and wholly pleased.

"Well, what do you think of me?" he said, gayly.

"I like you very much."

"Thank you. And I like you more than very much. Come!"

I took a step forward and looked up at the sky as I did so. It was a ghastly spectacle—great clouds of a dull ashen gray sweeping up to the zenith, and below, close to the horizon, a long bar of sullen smouldering red. And through all the thunder of the surf, I heard that weird cry.

"Why do you shiver?" asked Max. I told him as I clung trembling to his arm.

"I remember!" he said. "I used to hear the story in my childhood. But what harm can come to you?"

What indeed? A lonely girl, with no kin far or near, no soul to weep when the mould should cover her, no one to mourn though she broke her heart. I put this desolating thought into words.

Max looked down at me.

"Poor little girl!" he said, in a tone of infinite softness. But the beautiful magnetic eyes said something kinder than that. Is not love possible at first sight? Can it not spring up full grown in an hour?

Strange that in that moment I never

thought of Lucia! Afterwards she came to me, a black shadow between my love and me, from the sight of which I shut my eyes and went on dreaming.

The weeks of that golden, delicious summer passed, each an exquisite pearl, bound into a rosary of delight. We told them off one by one in a delirium of joy and love.

At last my aunt looked upon us with uneasy eyes. She bestirred herself.

One night the drawing-room was filled with the twilight and me only. I was waiting for Max—we were to walk together that night as usual. I heard his step in the room adjoining, and half rose, but my aunt's cold clear voice stayed me.

"Max, Lucia Trenholme is coming to-night. I wish you to drive over for her."

"Lucia coming!"

It was the ghost of his voice. I knew he felt the stab as I did. I stole out, made my way down to the rocks, and wandered absently about there, saying over and over again those words.

Lucia coming! It was all over then, this dream of bliss, and delight, and infinite holy peace. Back to your solitude, poor heart! There is no love for you, no hope, nothing glad and sweet, nor the hope of anything.

I did not weep. My heart lay too heavy in my bosom for the sweet relief of tears. I pitied myself with a tender compassion. So miserable, and only eighteen! So long before life could come to an end!

The night darkened. At last a chill roused me. I rose to cross back to my home. My home! How cruel the words. But peering through the gloom my heart suddenly stood still with terror. Only a great foaming waste of water, before and behind, a dim white line of foam, and afar off and inaccessible as heaven the white walls of the house.

Cut off by the tide! The cry rose to my lips, but it was only a whisper. I had ventured too far in my misery. Nay, not only was my return barred, but by-and-by the very rock on which I stood would be submerged.

"I did not know death was to come so soon," I said, piteously. After all, life is dear. When the blood is warm at one's heart, when the impulses are fresh and the affections vivid, it is hard to die—to go down into the coldness and darkness of the grave.

There was no help—none unless they should miss me at the house. If Max should think of me? Was that likely? No! While he was charmed by his new love, the cold

cruel sea would bear me away from his sight forever!

A stupor fell upon me gradually. The slow minutes passed. By-and-by I seemed to hear sounds, as if in a confused dream, then I seemed to slip away, away on an illimitable sea.

When I returned to myself I was in my own bed, and my aunt was bending over me, an unwonted expression of interest in her face.

"You're coming round, aint you, my dear?" she said, in a tone of greater kindness than she had ever used before.

"What has happened?" I asked, faintly.

"You were cut off by the tide, child," said my aunt. "It was a most imprudent thing to go so far out. If Max hadn't missed you and insisted on going for you, you would surely have been swept away."

I did not heed this much. The tones of the piano reached my ear.

"Is that Lucia playing?" I said.

"Yes. She is a most lovely girl. But why do I talk of that? You are to take this powder and go to sleep."

I took the powder, but I did not go to sleep. Before morning I was delirious—praying, sobbing, begging to be taken away from the cold cruel waves, beseeching Max not to go away.

So my nurse told me when after a long illness I came back to myself, the fever spent, and wasted to a skeleton.

How much of my secret I betrayed I shall never know. There was a curious expression in my aunt's face, and many times I caught her watching me in an odd furtive manner.

"Why doesn't Max come to see me?" I asked, one day.

She smiled.

"Max is very much occupied with Lucia."

"But he might come for a minute," I said.

She smiled again significantly, and I turned my face to the wall to hide the tears. I was too ill, too weak to reason. Only his neglect wounded me deeply.

I had a slow, weary convalescence. The autumn wore away, and the pallid snows, the short sunless days of winter came, and at last I sat up. Lucia danced in and out occasionally, never to stay long because "Max is sure to want me," she would say. A superb vivacious blonde, splendid in beauty and exuberant life. I looked at the poor wasted skeleton face in the glass, and at the thin bony hands, and contrasted them with her.

No wonder he should love her. I fell into a state of apathy at last, and it was then that Max came.

I was cold to him, perhaps, and yet I did not mean it. I was just stupid with my sorrow, and he had hurt me cruelly. Max looked at me, a certain wistful tenderness in his face. If we could have been undisturbed! But Lucia came in, said I must not be excited, and drew him away.

He never came again. Once I spoke of it.

"Never mind, Vivia," said my aunt. "One must excuse much to a man in love."

Weeks passed, and one day my aunt came into my room her face alight.

"I have some good news, my dear."

"I know it," I said, coldly. "Max is engaged to Lucia. I congratulate you."

"You may well do so. It is a splendid match. In a week he accompanies her home, and they are to be married in a few weeks."

That week passed. On its last day the little colored maid of all work crept shyly into my chamber, and with great secrecy gave me a little note.

"For de Lord's sake, Miss Vivia, write de answer quick 'fore missis catches me."

I read—"My dear Vivia! I cannot go away without seeing you. May I come to you to-night?"

Hot angry tears flowed as I read. To come to me so, after such long neglect! I took my pencil and wrote the single word "No" on the note and sent her back.

They went away the next day. In a week or two more I crept down stairs. Spring came but no Max. Presently aunt was sent for to the wedding. I think for three months afterwards she talked every day of the magnificence of the trousseau, and the position and wealth of the Trenholmes.

They went immediately abroad. Lucia wrote chatty letters and Max brief ones. All at once a blank of a month fell and my aunt was tortured by fear. Then there came a letter with broad black lines around it.

"Open it, child. O, if my boy should be dead! O, if I should be punished so!" Her face was gray and old. She rocked back and forth in agony. I ran over the sheet.

"Aunt, Lucia is dead," I whispered, tremulously.

"Dead!"

"Lucia—Lucia, aunt! Poor Lucia!"

She laughed—a strange unnatural sound it was at which my blood curdled.

"O aunt, don't, pray don't! Think of

Max. Great Heaven, how Max will suffer!"

God forgive me! I think I envied that poor dead girl because he would weep for her.

"Max can get another wife, but I have no other son," said my aunt, with something between a laugh and a sob. She grew hysterical after that, and I had to sit by her all night.

"Max will come home now," said all our friends. But not so. When letters came they announced his intention to remain abroad yet.

That was a strange, sad winter. About the middle of it my aunt was taken suddenly ill and died. It was a fearful shock to every one.

Her lawyer wrote to Max, and I added a letter giving the particulars and a word or two of formal condolence. I got a ceremonious epistle of thanks in return, and an intimation also that I might still consider Cliff House my home. Bitter as it was I stayed. I was not strong, and indeed I had no other resource.

How shall I write the history of the monotonous two years that followed? Best leave it unsaid, and forget how they burned their mark upon my life.

"Miss Vivia," said the housekeeper, one day, "I do wish you'd look over that desk of Mrs. Selwyn's, and save the papers that are of any worth, and let me burn the rest. It's getting an ill odor standing so long."

I undertook the task with reluctance. The desk had been examined by the lawyers for business documents, and there was nothing in it but old letters from Max to his mother. I read them over, and became absorbed in the reading. They showed me him as I knew him, fresh, winning, tender and true. As I returned one to its envelop a bit of folded paper slipped out. It was in his hand, and as I read it over I was only conscious of that fact. And yet it was a passionate declaration of his love for me—fervent and tender, too, like himself. A flash of a lover's jealousy also. "What did it mean that he might not see me? Was his mother right? Was it true that I was indifferent to him? Perhaps I fancied that he cared for Lucia. But he had told his mother that he cared to win no woman's love but mine. Would I send him one sweet word? If I grudged him the comfort he craved, then he should be certain my heart was set against him."

I sat like one dumb while these words burned themselves into my brain.

He had loved me then! He had not played at love-making for a summer pastime. He was my noble, chivalric Max—mine—I laid this happy thought to my heart. I brooded

over it that night, and the next day I wrote to Max, only sending him the little note and telling him it had just come into my hands.

I was not lonely now nor wretched. That love was company enough. But presently I began to wonder if he would come. There was nothing between us now, and though our way to happiness lay over graves we had wronged no one. And I hungered so to see his face once more.

A month passed, and then came a night when the wind howled and keened about the house like a host of lost spirits, and through it all was the wail of measureless woe, the ominous forerunner of storm and sorrow which I remembered had belonged to that first meeting with Max.

I got restless towards night, and I wrapped myself in my water-proof cloak and went out. Groups of people were gathered about on the beach, pale anxious women most of them, whose husbands were out in the little coasting vessels. No rain had fallen, but the sky was dun and angry, and the cannonade of the breakers was incessant and awful.

"It is going to be a fearful storm, is it not?" I said, speaking very loud to one of the men.

"I'm sure of it, ma'am! The island hasn't cried so since the gale twenty years ago when the *Bella Donna* came ashore."

I turned away sick at heart. I knew that story. The *Bella Donna* was from Spain—a beautiful, noble ship which went down in sight of the shore with its precious burden of human life. Was there any *Bella Donna* abroad for me, carrying my life and my hopes?

I wandered about till midnight; then I had a great fire made in the drawing-room and sat by it a long time. At last I fell off into a disturbed sleep, in which I was tormented by dreams of a ship going to pieces and Max stretching out imploring hands to me in vain.

Finally at some slight noise I started up broad awake. The dim gray day had come, and there stood Mrs. Dennett, the housekeeper, in my room. She was singularly pale and wan—or was it the sickly dull light?

In an instant I was broad awake.

"Dennett, what is it?"

"The storm has made awful work in the night, Miss Vivia," she said, solemnly.

I devoured her face with my eyes, reading my woe there.

"Dennett, Dennett! For the dear love of God don't tell me Max was in it!" I shrieked.

She began to sob.

"Poor Mr. Max! Don't look so, Miss Vivia! It's God's will—and he looks O so peaceful—as if he knew he was at home once more!"

I gazed at her stonily an instant, then I went by her mechanically and made my way to the lower hall.

Something lay there sheltered by a piece of

sailcloth, which one of the men stepped up and reverently removed.

O my lover, my noble, and beautiful, and true! That I should kiss you and you should not mind it, that I should weep and break my heart over you and you should lie passive and still! Beautiful precious gift brought to me over the sea.

# ONE MONTH FROM MINNIE'S DIARY.

CALDOR, M T

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Feb 1871; 33, 2; American Periodicals*  
pg. 172

## ONE MONTH FROM MINNIE'S DIARY.

BY M. T. CALDOR.

*June 1st, 186.—My cousin Isabel and Jenny Remick have gone out to select a summer outfit from the richly-loaded counters of Jordan & Marsh, in readiness for a visit in the country, at the palatial residence of one of our city merchants, more, they tell me, like an old English castle than an American country-seat.*

I shall accompany them—heigho! I fancy the clerks at Jordan & Marsh's will not be fatigued in attending to my wants, and that I shall not be over-fastidious in my choice of dresses. Why do I sigh? Yet it must be pleasant to be rich. Well, but I am not rich. Does it follow that I must be miserable, because I am a poor orphan girl, dependent upon a careless uncle's bounty for the very bread I eat! No, no! let me remember dear Madame A.'s parting words when we all left the boarding-school together, Isabel, Jenny and I:

"Isabel and Jenny are beautiful and wealthy, and you, Minnie, are plain and poor—but, if you please, your own generous heart and well-stored mind may carry you higher, and give you truer happiness than will come to either of them."

Thank you, dear Madame A. I'll write those words on my heart now; when I am rich they shall be framed in gold. Meantime let me be thankful that, through my aunt's parting injunction, I shall accompany Isabel on her visit. I shall catch a glimpse of this paradise Jenny so eloquently describes.

By the way, I wonder if my aunt knew I heard her parting words to Belle: "Be sure and take Minnie. You will find her useful,

and she is so sallow and plain that she makes your beauty, dear, a thousand times more sparkling." Did she think my heart was "sallow and plain" likewise, and could not feel the pain and bitterness of words like those? Foolish again! Let me wipe away these tears, and go to see my muslins smoothed and renovated into a respectability suitable for the "companion" of the beautiful Isabel Mayo, at Riverville, Colonel Damon's charming villa on the Hudson.

*June 9th, 186.—We are actually here, at Riverville—charming, romantic Riverville! I am almost breathless with delight! No matter for fine dresses, adulation, beauty, I shall be happy only to be left to myself and this delicious scenery, and to search out the wildwood haunts around the place. Here I am almost crying, like a homesick child returned in sight of the beloved fireside, to find myself once more in the country, which I have scarcely seen since my mother's coffin was borne out from our cottage home to its last resting-place. We came by the cars, and the Damon coach was waiting there to take us to the house. I had hardly patience with Belle and Jenny for their incessant chattering, as the carriage rolled along over the smooth green-wreathed highway. I was longing to listen to the old familiar sound of birds and insects and humming-bees; but, presently, I could not help following their conversation.*

"I give you fair warning, Belle," said Jenny, snapping the coin bracelet on her little wrist, with pretty vehemence. "I shall use

every stratagem to win, and you may do the same. Carrie seems to think it is useless to try, assuring me that he is incorrigible, and will not look so long upon the loveliest lady in the land as on a butterfly sporting over the garden; but Guy Gerald is a prize worth trying for, and this is a rare opportunity, for he remains with the Damons all the time his mother is in Europe. So we may be rivals, but friendly ones, I pray you."

Belle tossed her head scornfully. "I shan't interfere with your plans, Jenny. I shall scarcely stoop to flatter a gentleman so much as that; the seeking must be on his side—maybe not to win then."

Jenny laughed. "O, I understand all the artillery a belle can use, without seeming to proclaim war! You haven't seen him, Lady Isabel—perchance when you have, you may use a woman's privilege, and change your mind. We'll have a truce till you decide if you'll enter the lists against me. I want an open rival, not a secret enemy."

It was all spoken playfully, but I detected a latent uneasiness beneath the smiles on the pretty faces looking from those airy French hats on the seat before me, and congratulated myself for once that I was but the poor plain "companion," and could enjoy the fresh scenery and manifold pleasures of the country, without fear of disturbance through fine gentlemen, or coquettish schemes of my own.

Our approach to the house interrupted the conversation. Even Belle muttered an exclamation of surprise and admiration, as the coach slowly rolled over the broad white avenue that circled the handsome mansion, leaving a vivid emerald lawn between it and the blue sparkling river. It was enchanting! I gave one hurried glance around at great thickets of bloom, shining like mammoth gems, blue, crimson and gold, from out the velvety green, and followed reluctantly behind by companions up the massive steps, beneath the pillared piazza, into the small reception room, a perfect boudoir of luxury, where Carrie Damon was chatting with a fine soldierly-looking man that she introduced as Captain Lovell. She welcomed Belle and Jenny with girlish warmth—and gave me, too, a cordial greeting, that set me at ease directly, notwithstanding it showed very plainly that she recognized the difference in our stations.

The girls lingered over their joyful salutations, and I turned to a bay window to have another glimpse of the lawn and river. As I

drew aside the curtain, I almost stumbled directly into the lap of a gentleman, hitherto concealed by the ample festoons of damask.

I blushed crimson, stammering a few words of apology, but was so confused, that I did not perceive the look of vexation on his fine face. Carrie (Miss Damon, I ought to write it, but hearing Belle's familiar "Carrie," has taught me the habit also. And what matter? Here, in my journal, I am of the most exalted rank, since I am the principal personage. For once I'll rank their equal.) Carrie, then, laughed merrily.

"There, Guy, see what comes of secrecy. Ladies, allow me to present to you Mr. Guy Gerald, too bashful to appear before."

He was not in the least embarrassed. Bowing with the most unruffled indifference, and still retaining his book in his hand, he said something about not disturbing the ladies in the joy of meeting, gave another graceful inclination of his handsome head and disappeared.

"What a bear!" exclaimed Belle.

"Yes; we call him our handsome Bruno," replied Carrie. "Now let me show you to your rooms. I am ashamed to have kept you so long in your hats and mantles."

Belle and Jennie shared a large luxurious chamber, and I was grateful for the small pretty room opening from it, whither the ladylike Carrie herself accompanied me, hoping I would not be afraid to ask for anything I needed to make myself comfortable.

I am sitting at the open window now, having exchanged my travelling-dress for a pale pink muslin, while Belle and Jennie have gone down to the drawing-room, not very insignificant or valueless bales of flounces, silk tissues, point lace and jewels.

*Later.*—Oddly enough, I met with an adventure the very day of my arrival. It looked so inviting out in the fine garden I saw from my window, that I stole out to it, wandering, in a trance of delight from one strange plant to another, growing wilder with every step I took. A nice gray-headed gardener saw me, and recognized intuitively, I think, my love of flowers, for he followed me around, culling from one choice blossom and another, till he had gathered a large bouquet, which, with a respectful bow, he presented to me and retired. Gathering the treasure in both hands, as if afraid it would be snatched from me, I ran along to a grassy bank beneath a half-natural, half-artificial arbor, and throwing myself down there, gave way to the dreamy,

delicious influence of the air and sky and perfume. It was always an absurd habit of mine, even when a child, this talking aloud in solitude, as if inanimate things could hear and understand, so I began chattering over my flowers. There was a fine cluster of English pansies, whose long purple leaves looked up to me like the eyes of my childhood's friend.

"O you darling pansies!" murmured I, hanging over them with fond delight; "you carry me back to the time when I too had a home and friends to love me. Do you know there are sisters of yours blooming on my mother's far-off grave?"

Then down plashed a shower of tears upon the velvety blossoms. But tears could not remain in eyes so long unused to country scenery, with such a picture spread before them, and wiping them away I smiled again and leaned back, *in the fullness of delight*, inhaling greedily the fresh perfume of the flowers, and gazing about, hardly satisfied to be able to use but one poor pair of eyes.

"Ah!" I cried, triumphantly, "this visit, after all, will be the rarest treat for me. Belle and Jenny are welcome to their finery and elegance, their rides and flirtations, but *poor little homely I can go hand-in-hand and tete-a-tete with Nature.*"

As I spoke, I shook off a rosebug clinging to a half-opened crimson bud, and idly followed its course behind me, where a huge syringa formed a leafy screen, dividing the arbor into two sections. How I sprang to my feet as I saw it land safely on a glossy white wrist-band, *fastened with golden links around a wrist large and muscular, but white and delicate as my own*, lying idly amid the parting branches. My eyes darted along the black coat sleeve till they rested on a dark handsome face, whose brilliant eyes were fixed, with a look of amused curiosity, on my astonished, crimsoned countenance. I could not find voice for a single word until the tall form rose up from the grassy couch, and then the half-comical, half-impatient meaning that quivered around the full firm lips piqued my pride, and restored my self-possession, so when he said, laughing lightly, "I see you are determined to expose my retreat and want of gallantry, hide where I will," I answered, as coldly as he had spoken:

"The interruption is quite involuntary on my part, I assure you, sir. One does not get used immediately to the ways of strangers. In future I shall be careful how I venture

behind curtains or near concealing shrubbery."

The words were ungracious—I knew it the moment they were uttered; but that sarcastic look on his face irritated me. He only smiled good-naturedly, as he replied:

"I deserve the implied reproach. If I should try for an excuse, I should plead a constitutional dread of the graces and flounces sported by those gems of humanity styled 'young ladies.'"

"Not belonging to that class myself," returned I, "I shall not take up the gauntlet you have flung down."

He laughed aloud. Although every note jarred and vexed me, I could not help perceiving how clear and melodious the notes were.

"Pray, may I venture to inquire to what class of the animal kingdom you do belong?"

I looked him full in the face as I answered, calmly:

"Certainly, sir; to the very common, uninteresting tribe who do not sport either graces or flounces, yelept 'young ladies' companion.'" And with that, away I darted up the walk, coming, flushed and angry at I scarcely knew what, into the cool, pleasant little room allotted me.

Belle and Jenny have just come up from the drawing-room for the night. While I was unfastening the former's headdress, she said to Jenny, "What a shockingly impolite creature that Guy you rave about has shown himself to-night. Not a single word to either of us. I don't think he knew there was any one in the room but Carrie and himself—although I did hear him ask her if she had only two visitors. He is a perfect bear!"

I echo the last words here in my journal. But how oddly it happens that Belle and Jenny have had never a word from him, while he actually entered into quite a conversation with the poor obscure "companion!" Not very flattering, to be sure. What splendid eyes they were!

*June 13th, 180—*—The drawing-room party have gone for a drive. Captain Lovell and another gentleman were with them, so I suppose it must have been Mr. Gerald. I mistrusted, despite his "constitutional dread," that he could not long remain insensible to Isabel's surpassing beauty. Now I think I may enjoy the arbor unmolested, so I'll take out this daintily-bound volume of poems, and maybe take a siesta, when I am surfeited with sweets.

*Later.*—I had a few moments' solitude, and

that was all. What sent him here again? I am glad it was not I that intruded; but it is evidently his favorite haunt, so I must avoid it in future. We were both more amiable to-day, although we clashed occasionally. What splendid conversational powers he has, when he condescends to exert them. But that sarcastic vein spoils all, even his mellow musical laugh. What can have prejudiced him so against ladies?—fortune-hunters, I dare say. He evidently considers me too insignificant to try to avoid me. But there is some lace to be fastened in Isabel's sleeve, and I must go and attend to it. What did she mean when she frowned so, and muttered, "How stupid he is!" Was it Mr. Gerald? I'm sure he is anything but stupid.

June 15th, 180—Such an eventful day! A picnic in the grand old grove some two or three miles away from Riverville. We started in "the early, early morn," when everything was so sweet and fresh. I was very grateful to Miss Carrie for insisting on my going too. All that went from Riverville rode in a large open barouche; but there were many other families from the neighboring towns. Mr. Gerald was in the carriage too, although his servant rode that splendid black horse of his, ready for him to mount, I suppose, when he became disgusted with the young ladies' frivolity. However, he remained in the carriage all the way. My tongue fairly ached for the chance to speak a single word, but found none; my eyes, however, were well employed in the charming byways we came upon. Jenny and Belle made the most of his presence, and fairly outvied themselves in brilliancy and playfulness, compelling Sir Guy to give them more attention than he had ever done before. Once or twice I could scarcely refrain from laughing, as he was obliged to follow a slight conversation of Belle's. I verily believe he saw me too, for he held up his finger slyly, and put on such a look of comical distress, I was obliged to conceal my face in my sunshade to hide its mirth. I left the rest of the party the moment we reached the grove, and with my drawing portfolio under my arm, wandered away for aught I know, a mile or more. So many charming spots I found to sketch, that will wile away many a dull hour after I return to the dismal town. Once, while I was sitting on a fallen trunk of a tree, sketching a ruined mill, that like a ghost haunted the stream which ran deep and majestic through swamp and pasture—but there, in the pleas-

ant meadow where I sat, flowed out into a wide sunny lake—I was startled by hearing a voice behind me saying:

"Your perspective is very much in fault."

I was working away furiously, my bonnet on the ground, my hair disordered, and my face, I dare say, rivalling a peony, and I started as if a pistol had exploded in my ear. Turning around, there stood that ubiquitous individual, Mr. Guy Gerald, coolly looking over my shoulder. I was not so childish as to resent the criticism, but I thought, "He thinks it of little consequence what he says to me, and presumes to take such liberty as to watch my work. I will not bear it!" So my eyes flashed, and, closing the portfolio abruptly, I answered:

"I do not pretend to be an artist. I sketch for no one's amusement but my own."

"Selfish—eh?" asked, rather than remarked, the strange man. And placing a tiny basket in my lap, he added, "You seem to have forgotten luncheon-time, so I saved something for you out of the wreck," and turned away.

I looked after the manly figure till it disappeared behind a clump of limes, and with a little compunction for my impatience, examined the contents of the basket. If the dainties I found there were from the wreck, I wondered what the original repast had been. "Now I must find some water," I said, when the delicious meal was finished, and took my way towards the mill, where I saw an old-fashioned wheel-well. But before I reached it, my attention was attracted to a large dam built up by some ways above the angry swollen mass of water, across which a plank was thrown, and over the perilous pathway a little girl, very shabbily clothed, with a basket swinging on her arm, was cautiously taking her way. Something startled her—possibly my advancing figure—for she paused, looked up, then down, wavered a moment and then disappeared down the dam. I did not pause to take a single thought about it, but before I knew what had happened, I had dashed to the spot, sprang down also into the water, and caught the sinking child by her strong woollen dress. I blessed that freak of Isabel's, taking swimming lessons at the baths, for what had been taught me there enabled me sustain myself and the child quite easily. How to get out was another question. There we were, penned in by stone walls beneath the water and the high planked sides of the dam above. Possibly I might

have managed to climb upward alone, but with the insensible child it was quite an impossibility. The absurdity of the thing would have more forcibly occurred to me, but for the cold colorless face lying against my shoulder. It was too dangerous a situation for me to admit of delay, so raising my voice I shouted lustily, and in a moment I heard quick springing steps coming towards the water. I looked up eagerly, and with a bitter pang of mortification and disappointment, saw Guy Gerald's dark eyes looking upon me. My cheek burned, my voice faltered, I tried to speak—then I burst into tears, and ended by a wild peal of laughter. I think he must have believed me insane, for that quizzical look had vanished from his face, which was now only earnest, sympathizing and eager.

"Be patient a moment," he called. And I think those calm strong tones would have reassured me, had I been sinking in the dangerous whirlpool of the Ganges. "I saw you fall, and have been searching for a ladder about the mill, but there is nothing but a rope."

Another moment and he was lowering the rope. I secured it about the little waist, and watched him raise the helpless form in his arms, when it reached the top. How expressive, how tender, how gentle that sarcastic face had grown. I could scarcely believe it the same. I was wringing the water from my long brown hair, when he looked down.

"They should be green to belong to a mermaid," I said, meeting his eye, smilingly.

He smiled back, and lowered the rope. I shook my head, with recovered composure and confidence in him.

"Fasten it securely, and go and restore that poor little creature," I said. "I'll be there to help you in a moment."

He stood hesitating a moment, then answering, briefly, "Very well," disappeared. It was somewhat difficult, and my palms bore wide purple marks, where the rope bruised them, when I once more stood on terra firma. Having wrung what water I could from my saturated garments, feeling very much like a statue of Niobe in lead, I dragged myself towards the mill. The sight that met me there dispersed all thoughts of my own awkward appearance. There lay Poverty's little daughter, with eyelids still stiffly fastened to the waxen cheeks, and the rich, elegant, fastidious Guy Gerald was bending over her, calling her by many a sweet pet name, and chafing anxiously the

cold and pulseless wrists. Without speaking, I took her into my arms, and tried to warm her with my breath, and presently a shiver and sigh rewarded our united efforts. Soon, to our inexpressible relief, she was able to speak and stand.

Then he turned to me. "Now you must think of yourself. I beg your pardon for calling you selfish, a little time ago. See, here is a flask of wine I brought to season your luncheon, but after that perspective indignation, I dared not offer it. Take a generous libation, and toast, if you please, the good rope that you thought alone worthy to assist your ascent."

I did not refuse, for my chattering teeth, in that genial June air, warned me of the prudence of his advice. Then he wrapped the child in his coat, and taking her in his arm, peremptorily bade me remain quiet, while he carried her away. Scarcely fifteen minutes elapsed, ere he returned with his arms filled with dry pine boughs. I sat dreamily watching him, as he carried them to the old fireplace, producing a bundle of old letters and a box of tapers, and did not move when a bright flame flickered on the long-forsaken hearth.

"Now let me carry your seat to the fire, that you may dry those damp garments."

Was it the fastidious, reserved Guy Gerald who spoke, that was taking such kindly care of poor Minnie Grey? And yet, now that I was not afraid, I rose and replied at once:

"Damp! I think you might use a stronger adjective. What have you done with the cause of all this mischief?"

"Sent her home, which I shall take the liberty to do with you, when Sam arrives with a vehicle."

"I wish he would come," returned I, looking from the cobwebbed room to the elegant figure standing there in the firelight, smiling upon me. "I am afraid some of the party will be searching for us."

The old ironical laugh came again. I knew what he meant, and added, instantly:

"I don't mean that I think any one is aware I am not there in sight, but your absence is another thing."

Another laugh, and a searching glance, but no reply. Just then a horse and chaise dashed up to the door. His servant handed out a woollen shawl. I was carefully wrapped in it, assisted in, and Mr. Gerald had taken the reins, when suddenly he turned to me, saying, in a low voice:

"I beg your pardon. On a second thought, Sam shall drive you home. It is more prudent."

It was an honorable delicacy of feeling, shown to an unprotected girl. Whatever else you do, Guy Gerald, I shall never forget your chivalrous conduct at the mill.

When we reached the house, I ran up stairs to my room, and dashed to a mirror. What a wild, disordered, dripping creature stood there! Patches of mud on either cheek, collar torn and awry, and tresses stiff with a mixture of mud and water, and across one temple an ugly awkward scratch. I looked a moment, and then ran to my pillow, and burying my head, sobbed as if my heart would break. Minnie, Minnie Grey, what a simpleton you are! You are plain and poor —what matter if your toilet be not complete?

*June 16th, 180—*—I am a little ill to-day, and have kept closely to my room. Belle looked in a moment to ask, "How came Mr. Gerald to see you accept that offer to ride home?" So she does not know. He did not tell them about the accident; neither will I. They have gone now for a horseback ride to the Lake House. Belle was in high spirits, telling Jenny how Mr. Gerald had engaged her to ride beside his splendid black Fire-flake, and had really grown to be quite entertaining. How charmingly she looked, when she came in for me to fasten a stray feather in her cap, the vivid blue velvet riding cap was so becoming to her fair complexion, and the dancing feathers mingling with her sunny curls had so pretty an effect! Brilliantly beautiful, tenderly reared, and sole heiress to her father's ample fortune, what a flowery path opens before her! No wonder her little feet could not remain still, or her soft hand quiet, while I was at work on the troublesome plume, for the ardent throbbing of happy life along her veins. Will she win him? How stupid I am to-day. I wont write any more —I wont think, if I can help it. I wont, I declare I wont—cry!

*June 21st, 180—*—Nothing has occurred of any importance to me, and my spirits have been so dull I have not dared trust myself to write. In the meantime, I have grown well acquainted with the country about, through my solitary rambles. The rest of the household have been very gay. There have been boating, riding, and dancing parties, not to mention the musical soirees that enliven the evenings spent at home. Little enough have I to do with either. I did enjoy though, one

delicious sail on the pretty lake, beneath the blue surrounding hills I can see from my window, thanks, I suppose due to Mr. Gerald's politeness. He saw me standing in the parlor without my hat, when the others were dressed for out of doors, and said something to his cousin Carrie, who came to me and insisted upon my making one of the party. I began to think he had forgotten my existence. He is so engaged with Belle, no wonder he cannot remember her humble relative. Were I she, I would not show him how much his attentions pleased me. Jenny and Belle are slightly cool in their behaviour to each other. The ladylike Carrie came into the chamber this morning, while I was sitting with the girls, her soft eyes shining serenely with happiness, and her delicate cheek just tinged with a dawning blush, to tell of her engagement to Captain Lovell. I thought that protracted stroll in the garden boded as much. How happy she looked, adding archly to Belle, she hoped ere long to return her congratulations, while Belle looked prettily conscious, and Jenny tossed her head skeptically, and I—well, I came away asking myself what business the poor plain companion had in ladies' chambers, listening to their gay talk of loves and engagements.

*July 1st, 180—*—Why I have taken up my pen I scarcely know, for I think I am even more dull than usual of late. Country air surely cannot agree with me. The days pass swiftly, gayly for most, but some way sadly for me. Jenny has abandoned the field, and slitted away to Niagara. The lovers are all engrossed with each other's perfections. In this class I suppose I must include Belle and Mr. Gerald. And yet if they are engaged, why is the former so uneven and restless in her moods? Nevertheless, I heard Carrie telling Belle to-day how pleased she was to observe the change in her cousin; how gentle and tender he had grown, seeking instead of avoiding the drawing-room, and that Captain Lovell had been jesting him about the purchase of a diamond engagement ring, which he had not denied; and when she said it, Belle's cheek flushed warm and rosy as the sunset sky last night. They are walking together now, in the gardens. Her silvery laugh, mingled with his earnest tones, comes floating up to me through my open window. What ails me? Why am I not glad for her, my beautiful cousin? Heaven forgive me, if I am growing cold and selfish! The very summer sky, and balmy air, and budding

flowers seem changed, as if November had suddenly petrified ardent July with its icy breath. I will return to town. Stop, stop; I am blushing for myself. Minnie, Minnie Grey, for shame! Be a woman, a strong, patient, enduring woman, not a foolish child, voluntarily cheating itself with a hurtful dream. See, here on the table lies a book. Its glossy covers, and unrumpled margins show it has been little read. The very title betrays how dry and tedious it is. "Advice, Good Advice to Young Women." Just the thing for me; for mark, it says "Young Women," not "Young Ladies." This shall be the penance. Take it to the arbor, read it through, without one wandering glance at the sky or flowers, ay, not a sign or look at the syringa hedge, where once—never mind, take the book and go.

Sunset.—I went to the arbor. I have spent the afternoon there, and with the book in my hand have returned again, not a page turned, not a line scanned. Nothing do I know certainly of "Good advice to young women," for the first thing I did on entering the chamber was to march directly to the mirror, as once a little time gone by, this time to smile upon the image that smiled back to me. Was that Minnie Grey's face, that, with eyes shining bright and joyous, with bloom on the cheeks once so pallid, clearing away the sallow hue into something akin to fairness, with lips red and tremulous through the happiness rippling over them, like summer zephyrs over sleeping water? And the tresses, who dared to loop them with that glossy leaf and waxen bud from the great orange bush? This is the way it happened:

I stole out softly, looking ruefully at the scolding between blue and gold covers I was so soon to digest, and sank down dejectedly upon the rustic seat in the arbor, leaning my head back wearily, and closing my eyes to

shut out everything that smiled in wicked mockery. I thought of Belle in the garden beyond me, receiving the diamond engagement ring, and accepting also what made the glittering circlet seem a valueless bauble in comparison—the noble heart and generous hand of Guy Gerald. Then came up my own humble loveless lot, and my heart rebelled wildly against it. The floodgate of tears opened, and down plashed a shower through my closed eyelids. Suddenly a tender hand wiped them away, and a richly-keyed voice repeated, earnestly, "In tears, Minnie! What, my little heroine in tears!"

I sprang up, dashed them away, or dried them up with the burning fire in my eyes and on my cheek, and said, bitterly, as I strove to pass:

"Is it so wonderful any one should dare be sad, when you and Belle are happy?"

That brilliant eye was searching over my quivering face. I could not bear it, and covered it with my hands.

"Minnie, Minnie, dearest," said the thrilling voice, "of Belle I cannot speak; but Guy Gerald can have no happiness while you are sad."

Then came a long recital, earnest and eloquent. It is too sacredly copied on my heart for me to write it here; but when he paused, I removed the hands from my blinded eyes to ask, bewilderedly:

"What, Guy, poor, plain, obscure Minnie Grey, are you sure it is she you love?"

That diamond ring is sparkling on my finger. What would the beautiful Isabel say, did she know he declares it was only to hear of me that her society has been so often sought of late? I told him they would all be angry, yet he laughs and says, "Wait a little, and they may settle accounts with Minnie's husband!" Minnie's husband! Am I awake? Ay, it must be so, for I hear him call my name. Adieu!



# ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE.

Constant, Felix

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Apr 1870; 31, 4; American Periodicals*  
pg. 376

# ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE.

BY CAPTAIN FELIX CONSTANT.

It was midnight in the streets of a great city, and in the quieter portion of the town those streets were already deserted except when here and there a house illuminated from garret to cellar told of festivities within, or some departing guest awoke the sleepy echoes with the roll of his carriage wheels, or his measured footfall upon the pavement.

A little way from one of these windows, in the angle of a projecting building, lurked a young girl, as young, as fair, as well born and highly educated as any guest within that house, and yet as far removed from their gay circle as if she had been a worm writhing among the dust at their feet; one whom no mother would have suffered, even for Christian charity, her young daughter to approach, one whose touch was contamination, and whose address an insult. Perhaps she knew and felt all this herself, the poor creature, for as she crouched in her dark corner and peered out at the late revellers passing her upon their homeward way, she drew the miserable shawl close around her shoulders, and moaned and muttered inarticulately.

Suddenly a young man ran down the steps of the illuminated house, and walked rapidly up the street humming the air of the last *valse*, whose rich strains yet vibrated from the open windows behind him. As he approached, the girl started, sprang forward,

then crouched timidly back, but at the last darted from her concealment, and laid her hand upon the arm of the young man, already nearly past her. He started, glanced round, then sternly shook off the detaining hand, and would have passed on, but still the desperate woman clung, murmuring:

"Stop! Stop one minute, Robbie!"

"Let go! Be off, or I will give you in charge! There is a policeman coming—be off, I say!"

"O Robbie, Robbie!" gasped the girl, cowering almost at his feet while her trembling fingers slid from their hold upon his sleeve.

"Don't call me by that name, or any name! Never speak to me again, or dare to recognize me. Be off, I say, or I may be tempted to lay you dead at my feet. It would be the best fate that could befall you. Remember."

And wrenching away the foot at which the wretched girl had grasped, the young man strode on just as the policeman approached, closely followed by another young gentleman who had been speaking with him.

"O Robbie, if you can't pity me, who will? Come back and kill me as you said you would—it is the best thing you can do for me now!"

And the poor wretch, gathering herself up from the pavement, sobbed out these wild words in a strange, strained, horrible voice,

the symptom of impending hysterics, a nervous derangement of some species.

"Why, that fellow was Robert Stackpole!" ejaculated the companion of X 3, who coolly remarked:

"Young gents will do such things, but it comes mighty inconvenient afterwards often-times, just as it does here. I don't think the better of Robert Stackpole, if that's his name, for turning the gal into the streets and leaving her to the life she's leading."

"You know her then?"

"Know her, Mr. Beecham? Lord, she's been up a dozen times if she has once—Simple Susan they call her, though if she ever was that, it must have been a long while ago. But come, Susan, move along, you know it's against rules to be roving round this way. If the gentleman had given you in charge I'd have had to take you to the lock-up. Move on, Susan."

"He said he'd kill me—O, I wish he would, I wish he would! O Robble, kill me, and put me out of my misery."

"Here, my poor girl, take this, and go quietly home and to bed and to sleep," said Beecham, slipping something into the hand of the unhappy creature already moving mechanically towards the entrance of the little dark side street from whence she had issued. The cold slender hand closed upon the gift, but Simple Susan offered no thanks, made no halt, and the next moment had disappeared."

"Very kind of you, sir, but maybe not so wise," suggested X 3, with a guarded smile at his young companion's generosity; "she'll lay out that money in gin before she gets home, and they'll have a glorious drunk out of it, all hands on 'em."

Frederick Beecham made no reply, and a moment after, with a gruff "good-night," ran up the steps of the lighted house, and glanced into the drawing-rooms. The guests had nearly all departed, and those who remained were grouped around a young lady and middle-aged gentleman, at the head of the room, making their adieux and expressing the pleasure they had enjoyed.

"Good-evening, Miss Beecham. Nobody knows how to make an evening pass as you do!" half-murmured a young gentleman, with his sister upon his arm, while their mamma was saying at the other side:

"Not good-by, but *au revoir*, Mr. Beecham, for I depend upon seeing you with Miss Imogen at our little gathering to-night—not

that we can offer you anything like the charming time we have just enjoyed with you, but—"

And the dowager swept towards the doorway from which Frederick Beecham precipitately retreated, feeling unequal at that moment to exchanging the commonplaces he saw impending. A few moments later the guests had all departed, and the young man entering the rooms walked slowly down them, towards the spot where his sister and uncle still stood gayly conversing.

"What a pity, what a pity!" muttered Beecham, as his eyes rested admiringly upon the figure of his sister, who stood with her bewitching face a little upraised, a smile upon her lips and in her eyes, while one lock of the golden hair her uncle smoothed escaped from the comb and fell upon her pearl-white shoulders, adding the touch of nature which the artificial style of modern toilets leaves so absolutely out of account.

"Yes, a very successful evening, puss, and owing its success largely to the hostess, let me tell you. Do you know what I said to Robert Stackpole to-night?"

"No, uncle, what was it?" asked Imogen, a sudden wave of rose-color mounting to the roots of the golden hair.

"Why, I said that he wouldn't have to go through the purgatory most young husbands experience while their wives are learning housekeeping, for you were the perfect mistress of a household already."

"O uncle!"

"Why, 'O uncle'! When people are engaged it means that they intend some day to be married, don't it? And I gave my consent to Mr. Bob Stackpole some months ago. So now, Miss Prude, I will bid you good-night, and you had better get to bed and cherish your good looks for the wedding day. Good-night, Fred; you look tired, my boy."

"Good-night, uncle."

"And good night, Fred, for I am going to follow Uncle Harry's advice," said Imogen, putting her hands upon her brother's shoulders and standing upon her toes to reach his lips. But passing his arm about her waist Frederick led the laughing girl to a sofa, and seated himself beside her.

"Jeanie, do you love your brother?"

"Why, Fred, what's the matter! Love you, you silly boy! Why, whom should I love half so well as my own only brother, and we orphans, with no one but Uncle Harry in the world? You know how I love you, Fred."

"And whom else do you love?"

"Why, Fred! why—there's Uncle Harry—and—why, of course, Fred, I care for Robert, or I shouldn't be going to—shouldn't be engaged to him."

"But you love me the best, Jeanie?"

"Of course I do," replied Imogen, stoutly; but a guilty blush burned hotly upon the face she hid against her brother's shoulder, and she remorsefully raised the ring upon her forefinger to her lips.

"Well then, darling, you will not take it too hardly, you will not break your heart, if I tell you that you must for my sake give up Robert Stackpole altogether?"

"Give up Robert! Why should I, Fred?"

And the lovely head raised itself with a jerk from Fred's shoulder, and the burning color burned yet more brilliantly.

"Because, Jeanie, he is a mean, good-for-nothing fellow, and insults you by speaking to you, or even coming into your presence."

"Frederick Beecham! How dare you! How dare you—what, in the name of Heaven, can you mean by such words?"

And now Imogen was upon her feet, her blue eyes blazing with wrath, her lips quivering with indignant scorn, her whole slight figure nerved and braced for resistance. Her brother rose also, and confronted her sadly, but with determination.

"Imogen, you said you loved me. I thought at least that you trusted me," said he.

"And so I do love and trust you, Fred, but when you bring such horrible accusations against the man to whom you were so glad to see me engaged—when you say such things behind his back—"

"I will say them to his face to-morrow, never fear for that, Imogen. I am neither a coward nor a slanderer, although you seem to think me both."

"We won't quarrel, Fred—if we can help it, that is," replied Miss Beecham, coldly; "but I expect you to explain your words."

"Expect me to explain! O Jeanie, you love this stranger better than your own brother, after all," said Frederick, sadly, but Imogen's face never softened.

"Tell me why you call my betrothed husband a mean, good-for-nothing fellow, if you please," said she, steadily.

"Very well, Imogen, if you insist, I will tell you," replied her brother, sternly; "although I wished to spare your ears the pollution of the truth. But you will not take my word,

you will not trust my judgment, you set yourself in opposition and defiance towards me, and show a spirit I had not thought was in you. The reason of my calling Stackpole what I did was this: Not an hour ago I saw a miserable woman, one of those unhappy creatures of whom you may have heard, but of whom I trust you know nothing more, approach Robert Stackpole, and address him as her betrayer. She said, 'O Robbie, if you don't pity me, who will?' and 'I wish you would kill me as you threatened to just now.' He threw her off roughly, contemptuously, and bid her never speak to him again, or come near him. The policeman who was with me knew the unfortunate creature, and after speaking of Stackpole as her betrayer, said that she had fallen to the lowest depths of degradation, and rough and hardened though he was, he added words of scorn upon the man who, having led her astray, had then abandoned her, and as it were forced a life of infamy upon her; even a policeman spoke thus of him, Imogen, and can you, a delicate and virtuous woman, defend him or uphold him?"

Imogen remained silent for a moment, all the rich color fading out of her face, while her eyes grew wild and bright with suppressed emotion. At last she asked:

"Did the policeman tell you her name?"

"He called her Simple Susan. Almost all these unfortunates are known by some such *sobriquets*, dropping their own disgraced names, which are often unknown to their companions."

"And the policeman knew for certainty that Robert was—the man?"

"Certainly. And her own words proved it without his saying anything about it. There is no doubt of his guilt, my poor Imogen, and you will consent to let me tell him to-morrow that he is never to approach you again, will you not?"

"I will tell you to-morrow after breakfast. Good-night."

And with a gesture as abrupt as her words, the young girl left the room and wearily climbed the stairs to her own apartment.

"Strange that she should hesitate, but she will give him up, she must, she shall!" muttered her brother, as he summoned a servant to close the house.

The next morning a little after sunrise, three persons approached the middle of one of the principal bridges leading from the city to the suburbs, so nearly at the same moment,

that their meeting seemed a matter of pre-arrangement as indeed it was, so far at least as two of the parties were concerned. Of these, one was Robert Stackpole, who had rowed down the river from the university, as was his daily wont, and the other was Imogen Beecham, who, during these fine early autumn mornings, had suddenly become conscious of the advantage of a walk before breakfast, and was very apt to direct it towards a certain set of steps leading from the bridge aforesaid to the water. And if by chance Mr. Stackpole's boating touched in the same direction, what more natural or defensible than that these two, betrothed lovers as they were, should enjoy a little river excursion together, as indeed they had done many a time and oft.

But on this particular morning, Robert Stackpole's mind was so ill at ease that, instead of his usual steady and beneficial pull, he had indulged in a series of "spurts" and furious efforts, which had brought him to the bridge long before the hour when he had upon the previous night appointed to meet Imogen, and instead of waiting he had rowed on down the river and past the Milldam (for these were the days when Arlington street was not, and Commonwealth Avenue slumbered in the brains of the speculators), so far, that upon his return the "spurts" became compulsory to prevent the rudeness of keeping the lady waiting, an act of which, either as lover or gentleman, Robert Stackpole would never have been guilty.

By this means, however, he avoided encountering the third party whom we have mentioned as proceeding towards the place of rendezvous, and who, having arrived unnoticed, now lay hidden, waiting a fitting moment to join in the interview.

Stackpole, bringing his wherry to the steps by a skillful sweep of the starboard oar, glanced up with a smile at the face steadfastly regarding him over the parapet of the bridge and cried:

"Good-morning, dear! I hope I am not late!"

But then he stopped abruptly, for upon the white, still face of his betrothed he found no answering smile, in her blue eyes no love-look, but rather one of stern inquiry and determination.

"Imogen! Darling! What is the matter?" asked he, springing up the steps, and seizing her hand.

"I will go a little way up the river with you, and tell you what is the matter," said

Miss Beecham, releasing her hand and stepping unassisted into the boat. Without reply her lover followed, and taking the oars sent the little skiff with one strong impulse through the arch and out upon the clear water beyond.

Meantime the third party concealed in the neighboring arch became uneasy, for the rising tide threatened soon to make the position chosen untenable, and moreover the two lovers in their boat had passed out of earshot. But still the third party lingered, awaiting perhaps their return and the fitting moment for joining in their interview. Meantime Stackpole was saying:

"Now, Imogen, what is it, dear?"

"Robert, do you know a woman called—Susan, Simple Susan?"

And in spite of the young girl's stern resolution to let no womanly scruples stand in the way of a full and fair understanding with her lover, and the ample justice she meant to mete out to him, the scarlet blood surged up over face and neck and even to the tips of her white fingers, as she pronounced this name which she had been told was one of infamy and degradation.

As Stackpole heard it, the healthy color faded from his own face, and his oars dipped over convulsively in and out of the water, then hung suspended, while an indescribable look of horror, shame and astonishment crept over his ghastly features, and stared from his wide-open eyes. Imogen noted the expression well, and with a new pang at her heart, decided it to be the look of conscious guilt.

After a moment of silence, Robert answered, and as the hoarse, unnatural voice issued from his white lips, Imogen glanced up in horror, then pityingly averted her eyes.

"Yes, I know of such a woman. But how dare you to name her?" said he.

"And what is she to you?" pursued Imogen, the momentary relenting dying from her face.

"Nothing—less than nothing. Who links her name with mine?" exclaimed Stackpole, fiercely.

"Nothing? She is nothing to you? Well, what has she been to you in times past? Did not you love her once?"

"I will answer no more questions, Miss Beecham. These inquiries are very strange for a modest young girl to make of any man."

"Even when that man is her betrothed husband? O Robert, they told me this

terrible story of guilt and shame, and I would not believe it. I braved all, the reproaches of my friends, my own reluctance, and, as it proves, your bitter taunts, because I believed that when once I spoke openly to you, and gave you an opportunity to explain, you would do it, and deny everything, and I would have believed you. O Robert, Robert, cannot you deny it? Cannot you say there is no stain upon your name and fame?"

"No, Imogen—I deny nothing. There is a stain, a foul stain upon my name, and I had no right to offer that name to you. Forgive me so much for the sake of the love that you once professed, and so let us say good-by."

He took up the oars as he spoke, and turned the bows of the little boat down stream. A few strokes would bring it to the bridge, and Imogen measured the distance with her eye. Just that little distance and they two must part—forever. She turned her eyes imploringly upon her lover.

"Robert! I cannot believe even you, when you speak against all that I have believed you. O, deny that you have any responsibility in this wretched woman's fall, say that there is some mistake, some mystery; say only that you need not blush before me on her account, and I will believe you without another word. O dear, dear Robert, say that I may honor and trust you still!"

"Imogen, I can deny nothing, explain nothing—I can say but one word more to you, though both our hearts should break, and that word is—good-by, and may God in heaven bless and comfort you, my innocent darling."

"O Robert, do but ask me to trust you, and I will do it without another word," pleaded Imogen, and just then the boat shot the arch and rounded towards the landing steps. And now the tide had risen so high that the position chosen by that strange third party to the interview of the lovers had become untenable, and, moreover, the fitting moment had arrived, and she had come to join them. Close beside the steps she lay, her white face and wild dark eyes gleaming from the shadow of the bridge, her long dark hair floating around her, and clinging in melancholy mockery of the modesty so long forgotten, about the bosom left exposed by the miserable dress. One hand was gripped upon the dead heart whose last pang was the happiest moment it had known for years, while the other, rising and falling with the restless tide, seemed pointing to the man, who motionless

with horror leaned forward, and read that ghastly face.

One moment he stared in silent horror, then throwing down the oars, he leaned over and laid his hand upon that frozen brow, turning the face full towards his own.

"O my God! My God! How can I ever forgive myself! O, my poor, poor child, Susie! Susie! Dead! Yes, dead, and it was I that killed you! I am your murderer!"

He was out of the boat now, and with his arms about the dead woman's waist, was drawing her from the water, supporting her upon his knee, and bending over her with such a ghastly horror upon his face that Imogen could almost have pitied him—and yet not quite, for she was a woman, and felt herself deeply wronged, nay, insulted, that the man who yesterday was her betrothed husband had now forgotten her very presence, while he wept over the dead body of his dead mistress.

"Please to let me pass you, Mr. Stackpole!" said she, coldly; and as Robert neither answered nor moved, nor seemed in the least aware of her presence, Miss Beecham stepped over the sodden skirts of the drowned woman as they rose and fell with the tide, and sweeping past her unconscious lover, she mounted the steps with quick, proud feet, and at the top encountered policeman X 3, who was looking curiously over the parapet.

"Found her floating, eh, miss?" asked he, a little sharply, as the young lady approached.

"Yes," replied Miss Beecham, crisply, and would have passed, but X 3 had out his note-book and pencil and stood in the path, politely but obstinately.

"Please to oblige me with your name and address, miss, before you go. It's like enough you'll be wanted on the inquest."

Imogen turned pale, hesitated a moment, and then, yielding as we all do to the majesty of the law, even in the person of its humbler instruments, did as she was ordered, and receiving official permission to "pass along," complied, with an odd feeling of degradation mingling with the agony at her heart.

Meantime X 3 returned the note-book to his pocket, cast his shrewd eyes up and down the bridge, nodded to a couple of men, muttered a word or two as they approached, and with them at his back descended the water-stairs and laid his hand upon Robert Stackpole's shoulder.

"We'll help you get her out of the water, young man, and I'd like to have you come

along with me to the station, just to give your testimony to finding the body, you know?"

"The station! I didn't kill her in any way that the law can take hold of!" exclaimed Stackpole, starti. <sup>ng</sup> his feet so wildly that X 3 laid a decided <sup>hand</sup> upon his arm, saying soothingly the whi. <sup>u</sup>"

"There, there, don't say any more! You'd better not tell me nothing about it, nor so much as speak of killing, for it's an ugly word at the best of times. You just come along quiet with me, and here you, sir, you just help me up with the body, and Dave, you look after the boat, and carry it to Burton's wharf. Tell 'em it was me sent it, and they'll look sharp after it. Now, Mr. Stackpole!"

And ten minutes later Simple Susan began her last journey under custody, lying in the bottom of a light wagon, her dripping clothes decently straightened, her poor white face and staring eyes decently hidden beneath the fine cumbrie handkerchief which a gentleman in the crowd had silently spread over it. Perhaps the recording angel may have rated that little act of humanity as high as the "cup of cold water" we are bidden to offer each other in distress; at least we must believe that when that gentleman lay down at night, he remembered the occurrence of the morning without regret or shame, although the recipient of his courtesy "was a woman of the city, and a sinner."

In the course of the forenoon, greatly to the disgust and horror of Frederick Beecham, a summons was served upon his sister, ordering her to appear as witness at the inquest to be holden the next morning upon the body of a woman known as Susan Jones, found drowned near University Bridge.

"See now what you have gained by disregarding my advice, and seeing that fellow again! Now you have got yourself mixed up with this disagreeable story, and we shall have the pleasure of seeing your name in every penny paper and Police Gazette in the country. I am really angry with you, Imogen. It is too bad."

"O Fred, don't, don't! My heart is breaking with the sorrow and the shame that have come upon us all, and I cannot bear that you should be harsh too."

And Frederick Beecham, pressing his sister's slender form to his heart, and soothng the golden head upon his breast, vowed silent oaths of deadliest vengeance against the man whose vices and whose deception

had fallen so sorely upon that innocent head.

"I hope the law will spare him, for by the living God I will not," muttered he, as Imogen left the room, and the old uncle who overheard him shook his head.

"Fred, Fred, remember who said 'Vengeance is mine,'" said he; "and remember too that none of us are sinless in His eyes; none of us, not one."

"Yes sir, I knew all that, but—" and the young man dashed out of the room and the house. Uncle Harry shook his head again:

"He don't know the man his father was—it is lucky too that he don't. Poor fellow, poor Fred! it would be too hard for his proud spirit to bear."

The inquest was not a long one, for the evidence was terribly direct. Frederick Beecham testified to the conversation he had overheard between the deceased and the prisoner, and the exclamation she had used after parting with him of, "Kill me, Robbie, as you said you would!"

Policeman X 3 corroborated Mr. Beecham's testimony, and added his own account of the finding of the body, not forgetting the declaration of the prisoner that he "had not killed her in any way the law could get hold of."

The next witness was Miss Imogen Beecham, and as she was led forward by her uncle and brother, an involuntary murmur of pity and admiration ran through the little group of spectators, for her charming face was as pallid as it was lovely, and her slender figure seemed bowed and shrunken as if by the weight of a load too heavy for endurance. But although her heavy eyes told of sleepless hours and wasting tears, they were firm and brave, and though the silvery voice had taken a pathetic strain that thrilled the heart of every listener, it was true and unfaltering. She felt that what she had to say would tell terribly against the accused, but it was the truth, and better to her mind that both he and she should go down to the grave together, than that either should miserably save life or reputation through a perjured oath.

So Imogen told her story, word for word, as it had passed before her eyes, and when asked what were the exclamations of the accused when he first discovered the body in his path, she repeated the fatal expression:

"It is I who have killed you! I am your murderer!"

This was the last; and as she was led away the poor girl murmured in her brother's ear:

"I have sworn his life away; O Frederick, I have sent him to his doom."

"You have told the truth, poor sister, and what could you do less?" replied the brother; and perhaps it was the best comfort he could have given her.

The inquest and preliminary examination were over, and Robert Stackpole was fully committed to jail to await his trial for the murder of Susan Jones, upon whose left temple, beneath the hair, had been discovered the trace of a terrible blow, which some of the jurors were disposed to think had been given by the corner of the stone pier as the girl fell, or was thrown into the river, but which a majority insisted had been inflicted by the head of a loaded cane, whip, or similar instrument.

Public opinion took the matter up, and vehemently discussed it pro and con. The masses, ever eager for the largest attainable horror, believed implicitly in the guilt of the young man whose elevated social position was at once an aggravation of the crime, in their eyes, and an added zest to the expected punishment.

"He wor a studyin' lor over there to the colleges, and for all his studyin', he can't find the lor that'll keep his own neck out o' the sheriff's noose," said Bill, to Joe, as they smoked their pipes over the police report of the committal, and Joe winked knowingly.

"Them chaps is the very ones as wants to be hauled up. They've got eddication and tin, and Lord knows what, to keep 'em straight, and if they goes crooked arter all, why, I say, hang 'em up fer a warnin' to the rest. A poor gal's life is as good as a rich feller's, and if he was the one that sent her to bad in the first place, why, all the more, hang him, hang him, hang him, says I."

Among Stackpole's own associates the verdict was different. Very few believed that he had absolutely murdered poor Simple Susan, but all believed that he had ruined her, and were willing that he should indirectly suffer the punishment of imprisonment and disgrace which the law so unjustly refuses to directly inflict.

"Of course the poor girl killed herself, and the trial for murder is all gammon. Stackpole will be acquitted, without the shadow of a doubt; but meantime he will have suffered two or three months imprisonment while waiting for his trial, and the whole matter will be so thoroughly ventilated that the fellow will never hold up his head again, in

this city at least, and serve him right too."

So said old Midas to older Croesus, as the two toasted their auriferous shins before the fire in the luxurious back parlor, and Croesus, whose second daughter had been a little disposed to envy Immonds Beecham her conquest, responded her! ny:

"Yes, serve him right, the scoundrel. The girls will know now that it isn't every mustached scamp that comes along that will make a good husband."

And Stackpole himself? He said nothing, absolutely nothing. The first lawyer in the country was sent to him, engaged by "a friend who believed him innocent," so said the note of introduction which he presented, and Robert, reading it, smiled sadly, put the little note in his breast pocket, and remarked:

"A beautiful day, I should think, Mr. Markham."

"And what is our line of defence, my dear sir?" asked Mr. Markham, presently.

"I never raised my hand against that poor girl, but I killed her with my words. Make what you can out of that," replied Stackpole, sullenly, and at the end of an hour it was all that the lawyer had gained.

Then came a note from Imogen:

"I do not, for a moment, believe you guilty of the murder, but, O Robert, if you can do it, for Heaven's sake explain away the mystery involving you with that poor girl. Contradict this horrible story which is in every one's mouth. Robert, Robert, do not force me, by your silence, to believe it too, for I had rather see you cold and dead before me, than to believe in your moral and spiritual death. If I must lose you, Robert, let me at least keep my faith and trust in you."

And to this Robert only replied:

"I did not commit the murder, and I cannot explain my connection with the girl. Forget me—as I will never, living or dead, forget you."

And so the weeks and months went on, and the day of trial came. The court was crowded to suffocation, and as the prisoner was brought in, the spectators crowded so tumultuously forward to catch a sight of him, that several persons were thrown down and trampled upon, and the presiding judge was about to give an order to clear the room, but dared not risk the popular indignation and possible riot that might ensue.

The trial proceeded rapidly. The evidence for the prosecution was very little beyond what had already been produced upon the

inquest, and that for the defence was almost wholly confined to testimony to character. No explanation was offered of the connection between the accused and the deceased, or of his singular and repeated self-accusation as her murderer. Neither was any alibi attempted, or account given of the prisoner's occupation between leaving Mr. Beecham's house at a few minutes past twelve and his appearance upon the river at a little before seven. He had occupied his room at the college boarding-house during that time, but no testimony spoke to the hour of his arrival, or that of his departure therefrom.

The case was an eminently obscure and unsatisfactory one, and so felt judge, jury and counsel, not to mention a hungry and thirsty public, who snarled and growled over the crumbs offered them instead of the full report they had expected, in a very unamiable fashion.

But the report was to come, and did, although at the very latest moment, in fact just as Mr. Markham was about to announce that the case for the defence was closed; before pronouncing those final words he rolled his eyes over the faces of the crowd, as if to apologize for the case thus closed remaining so remarkably empty, he caught sight of policeman X 3, cheerfully elbowing a way through the audience, nodding shrewdly to him as he did so, and dragging after him a miserable, hopeless looking creature whose sodden white face and ragged clothes told the story of vice and destitution even at the first glance.

By the time that Mr. Markham had finished the eloquent but unmeaning sentence with which he hastily replaced the final declaration that had been upon his lips, X 3 had reached his side, and, in a moment more, had whispered a few energetic sentences, and pushed forward the woman who stood stupidly staring about her.

"Please your honor I have another witness to offer," exclaimed Mr. Markham, excitedly; and, the court graciously granting permission, Nancy Johnson was pushed into the witness-box, duly sworn, and proceeded to give her testimony, in the depressed, half-articulated voice peculiar to the degraded of either sex. Its amount was this:

Nancy Johnson had been the friend and room-mate of Simple Susan for several months, and had "liked her well enough." Upon the evening of the murder she had been in her own room, just going to bed, as it was

very late, when Susan suddenly entered, her face more white and haggard than Nancy had ever seen a living face, and coming up to her had placed a sum of money in her hands, saying:

"I'll make you my heir, Nancy. You're the only friend I've got in the wide world, and you've been good to me when you had money and I had none."

Then taking a little desk out of her trunk and throwing it into Nancy's lap, she added:

"There, that's all I have in the world, and now good-by."

With that, as Nancy hesitatingly averred, and indeed the act seemed almost incredible, the poor girl had thrown her arms around her companion's neck, kissed her twice or thrice, and then ran out of the room and the house.

"And what did you do then, Nancy?" asked the counsel for the prosecution, with a glance at the jury.

"Went straight out and got drunk, fit with Blind Billy, got took up and carried to the lock-up, and next morning was sent over to South Boston for four months. I came back last night, and some of 'em was telling about Simple Susan, and I felt bad—"

"Why did you feel bad, Nancy?" interrupted the counsel, cynically.

"'Cause I was fond of her," replied Nancy; and the touch of nature and kindly feeling at once repaired the damage the wily counsel had led her into doing her own character and testimony.

"I felt bad and I went to my trunk and got out her little desk, and took on over it for a spell," said Nancy, "and while I was at it X 3 he came in, knowing me and Susan was mates, to see if I couldn't tell something more than the rest could about her and that feller. So I showed him the desk, and he found that book, and then he lugged me right up here. I've seen Susan a writing in that book time and again, and crying over it like she'd cry her eyes out, but I can't read; I aint got no learning, anyway, and that's all."

And so the poor tattered and begrimed little journal was produced and handed to the judge, and handed to the jury, and put in as evidence, and Mr. Markham clearing his throat, stood up and read it out from end to end; the poor forlorn little journal which told the whole story in its disconnected scraps, and did not know how much it was revealing. Here are a few:

"I saw his daughter to-day. She is a

beautiful creature, and innocent and pure as I was once, yes, as I was when her father first saw me on that fatal visit to the beach. Her name is Imogen, and she has a brother called Frederick after the father. I hope he will not be such a man, or rather I hope no other girl will be so weak and wicked as I was—only five years ago and I was at home, with father, and mother, and Robbie, and they all so fond of me. O my God, to think I should have deceived them so, but it was he that led me on, it was he who planned it all. If his own daughter should meet with such a man, why should not she fall too?

"I saw Robbie, my own darling brother—no, I must not call him so now, but he was all that once—and he went into Mr. Beecham's house. I waited until I could ask one of the men-servants, the women would not have spoken to me, and he told me that Robbie is to marry Imogen Beecham. But if she knew of me! O my God, where shall I hide myself, and how? I will wait until I can speak to Robbie when no one can see us, and I will ask him for a little money to take me to some quiet country place where I can die and be forgotten. I loathe this life so, and I am sick. I know I cannot live long, and if only I could die among good people and in the blessed country where I was born and bred, and where father and mother lie at rest forever. It was I who sent them to their graves, it was I that broke their hearts—Robbie told me so, when he found me crying by their graves, and he said then that he never would speak to me again, never would own me, no, not to save both our lives. I was not so very bad then—it was just after Mr. Beecham had left me; but when Robbie said that, I knew there was no hope, and I just let myself go.

"But now perhaps he will feel differently, and if only he will help me, I will go away and die, and be forgotten. Yes, I must die—if he will not help me, still I must die—O that black deep river—I went and looked at it last night, and then I dreamed of it—but I cannot live this way—no, no, no."

When Mr. Markham finished reading there fell a silence, broken only by the suppressed sobs of the audience and one low, deep groan from the prisoner, as, sitting with his head in his hands, he gasped, brokenly:

"It was I that killed her—yes, though man acquit, God holds me her murderer."

But as he left the court-room, acquitted of every suspicion, and complimented by the presiding justice for his forbearance, courage and self-respect, Frederick Beecham linked his arm in his, whispering:

"I should never dare ask you to forgive my father's son, but for Imogen. My father killed your sister—murdered her, body and soul—but you shall take mine instead, and all shall be forgiven. But perhaps now that you know all—"

"I knew it was your father who ruined my poor girl, but he is dead, and I thought that she was until that night. I never meant that Imogen should guess the horrible truth. I could have died if it had come to that, but I never would have spoken."

"I believe it. Come to Imogen," said Beecham, gravely. And an hour later the lovers sat together, reconciled at last.

But although they married a little later, and enjoyed their share of happiness, who can believe that this tragedy failed to tinge with darkness their whole after lives, or that the sins of the father failed to be visited upon the heads of the children!



# ONE NIGHT'S WORK.

Shaw, Blanche

Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Aug 1873; 38, 2; American Periodicals  
pg. 122

## ONE NIGHT'S WORK.

BY BLANCHE SHAW.

TOWARDS the close of an August day in 18— I was sitting on the piazza of the hotel of *R*—, with my chair tilted back, my hat slouched over my eyes, and a cigar in my mouth, trying by my appearance to impress beholders with a sense of careless happiness that I was far from feeling. And, dear reader, if you will be sufficiently curious, and good-natured to hear me say a few words regarding my condition then, you will readily understand why external and internal states of being were so completely out of harmony.

This same rapidly waning day was the last of a vacation that had been kindly granted me by Messrs. Cash & Profit, in whose office I held a position; not, if I confess the truth, on account of any merit or excellence of my own, but from the fact of my father's being a college mate of Mr. Cash's. I held the position for the sake of old-time memories, and for the same reason faults and shortcomings, that would have given another and probably a better man his quietus before he could put in a defence, were in my case overlooked, or punished only by a reproof. This, you say, is all very nice, and so it is; but everything has some disadvantage, and in this particular case it was the fact that Mr. Profit, not having the same interest in me that his partner had, did not always endorse his humane consideration. More than once he had remonstrated with him on his unwise fondness, the last time with so much force and reason that Mr. Cash was obliged to abandon the defence, and throw himself upon his friend's mercy. He won the

battle, but it was a hard fight, and he told me at the close of a very serious conversation he held with me immediately after it, that, if I did not at once change my course of conduct, give up my fast friends and dissipated habits, he saw very plainly what the end would be. Mr. Profit would close his ears to all prayers, even if his sense of duty would permit him to make any in my behalf. I listened with respect, promised to do as he desired, and kept my promise by following my old ways so secretly that the good man thought I had really reformed, and he arranged with Mr. Profit to give me, as a reward for my improvement, two weeks vacation, stipulating, however, that I should be back at my desk on a certain day, or fear the worst. And now comes the rub; that "certain day" would be the one coming, and that evening, as I sat on the piazza looking so thoroughly at peace with the world and myself, my poor attenuated pocket-book held one solitary five-dollar note, which bore about the same ratio to my unpaid hotel bill and indispensable railroad ticket, that the proverbial drop does to the rest of the bucket's contents. My disposition was cheerful. I generally let care take charge of itself, but this once I was false to my philosophy, and let it take charge of me. I was unreservedly and completely miserable; I saw no way of climbing over, going round, or getting through the wall before me. I certainly could not meet all my liabilities with five dollars, and it was equally certain that I could not leave the place with them unpaid. I could send

home for money, but by the time it would have reached me, Mr. Profit would also have tried, condemned and executed me. At this stage of my reflections two other men came on the piazza, and seated themselves a short distance from me, and to this pair, who had been my constant companions for the past two weeks, I was indebted for my desperate situation. They were men of the worst character, scoundrels and gamblers, who had taken advantage of my vanity and ignorance to lead me into all kinds of dissipation, and who had, with most beautiful skill, transferred the contents of my pocket into theirs. I thought of this rather bitterly as I looked at them from under my slouched hat, and I almost regretted that I had not been a "good boy."

But regrets were vain; they would not restore my wallet to its former plumpness. I was a good hundred miles from my place of business, and there I would have to stay till my sorrowing parent should send funds enough to bring his discouraging son back to his arms. To him I should have to go, for I well knew that my old desk would know me no more. My feelings grew so violent that, before I was aware of it, they forced from my breast a deep sigh. The unusual sound floated to the ears of my companions, and Fenton turned to question me on its origin, when a more exciting event, namely, the arrival of the stage, claimed the attention of all. The vehicle stopped before the door, and the passengers, a goodly number, got out. As they came up the piazza, I noticed a couple among them who at once attracted my attention; they were a young man and woman, the newness of whose clothes announced to all beholders the fact that they were on their wedding tour. The man was a sturdy broad-shouldered fellow, evidently, from his bronzed cheeks and large hands, a tiller of the soil. His face was honest and simple, and shining all over with a look of sheepish happiness. The woman, who clung tightly to his hand, was a plump little damsel of about eighteen; she had big blue eyes, a rosy complexion, and altogether was very pretty, in spite of the half-scared look and rustic manner with which she clung to her companion. I turned to Fenton and Clark as they came up the piazza; as I did so, I saw them exchange glances and look at the pair.

"Wedding party," said I, with a laugh.

"Jemima is quite pretty; guess Josiah has never been away from his marm b'fore."

They laughed in reply, and then Fenton yawned:

"Blamed stupid here, boys; let's move around."

They both got up, but I, feeling in no mood either to talk or be talked to, kept my seat till they left, and then I sauntered off by myself, and reviewed the situation obstinately but unsuccessfully till dark.

Both Fenton and Clark had eaten supper when I returned to the house. Being tired of solitude and my reflections I despatched my meal hastily, and forming a resolution to be jolly in the present, no matter what the future might hold, I went in search of them. I was not long looking. I went to the barroom first, and they were both there, Fenton sitting by the window smoking, and Clark leaning against the bar talking to the bridegroom. He nodded to me as I entered, and continued his conversation.

"Yes, Goshen in Connecticut is a fine place. I was there once myself."

"You don't say!" exclaimed the Go-shenite, highly delighted. "How long did you stay? Did you go to meeting while you was there?"

"I regret that I did not have the privilege, but my duties would not permit of my remaining over the Sabbath."

"That's too bad! You ought to have gone to meeting; lots of putty gals, I tell you. And, cricky, you should hear that choir! Can't they make Old Hundred ring! It isn't so good now while Melissys's away. She's one of the leaders."

"Indeed! I have no doubt but that I should have been charmed to hear her. Your sister, I presume?"

"Sister? You bet not!" And then, with a look that was meant to be very cunning, but was really only foolish, he added, "We are on our weddin' tower now, Mister —."

"Ah!" replied Clark, warmly. "I congratulate you, and I beg you will join me in drinking to your future joy and prosperity. What shall it be?" And he turned to the bar.

"Well, rally, I can't say. I aint much used to your tavern drinks; marm used to make a sort of beer I liked, but I reckon they don't keep that here."

"Doubtful," said Clark. "What do you say to brandy?"

"Brandy! Aint that mighty strong?"

"O no; no stronger than you hope the love between you and Melissy will prove. John," to the bar-tender, "two glasses of brandy."

John passed the bottle and glasses. Clark poured out a large drink, and then passed the bottle to Josiah, who helped himself as bountifully. Clark raised his glass.

"Here's to long life and happiness, and a blue-eyed young Melissy to sing 'Old Hundred' when her mother's voice is cracked."

"Thankee," said Josiah, with a grin. And he gulped down the liquor, which was like so much fire to his unseasoned throat. "Cricky!" he said, catching his breath; "but that's strong stuff!"

"Bosh!" replied Clark; "it is only because you are not accustomed to it.. I suppose that Goshen people do not drink. By the way, how do you manage to spend your long winter evenings there? I should think you would find them very dull."

"Not a bit. Them fellows what's got gals goes a courtin', and them that hasn't hang around the stores and talk."

"And play cards, I suppose?"

"Wal, sometimes—not often; we aint much favorites of cards. The old folks don't like them, you see."

"Ah, indeed! I suppose you always mind the old folks?"

"Putty nearly always; but sometimes we'll have a game of seven up. For my part, I don't see no harm in it."

"Not the least, my friend. It is a very innocent amusement. By the way, what do you say to a game now? If those two gentlemen will join us, I think we might pass an hour or two very pleasantly."

He looked at us, and we both assented; but Josiah demurred.

"I should like it fust rate, gentlemen; but Melissy is all alone, and, being on our weddin' tower, you see she might get huffy over it."

At this moment it occurred to me that green ones, on their "weddin' towers," sometimes carried large rolls of bank notes, and that, possibly, this particular one might be the means of helping me out of my trouble; and, with this idea, I spoke quickly:

"Don't hesitate on her account, for, if I am not very much mistaken, I saw her deeply interested with some ladies in the parlor just before I came in."

"You don't say so! I guess it must be them two what set opposite; they seemed to take a shine to her. Well, mister, if that's the case, I don't care if I do try my luck a little."

"Very well," replied Clark. "Don't you think we had better go to my room? It will be much pleasanter."

"Go to Jericho, for all I care!" said Josiah, on whom the liquor had begun to show its effect.

Clark directed the bar-tender to send up more brandy, and then we retired to his room. On the way Josiah grew quite jovial, sang several bars of Old Hundred, and remarked, "That he didn't care if Melissy did get mad; if she thought she was going to henpeck him, she had got the wrong corn, and the sooner she knew it the better." We all applauded his spirit, and seated ourselves at the table. I played with Fenton, and Clark took Josiah. The first game they beat us; Josiah grew uproarious, and took another glass of brandy.

"That's right," said Clark. "Drink to High-Low-Jack-and-the-Game." And then turning to Fenton, "I'll bet you five dollars that he has it."

"Excuse me, sir," replied Fenton, with dignity, "I never bet."

"Bosh!" said Clark; "what harm is there in a little shake like that, just put up to make it interesting? I don't believe our friend from Goshen would object to it?"

"Object! No, you straight-laced Puritan! Go in, I say, and darn the expense! I'll go a tenner on it!" And he produced the supposed roll, and laid a greenback on the table.

Fenton hesitated a moment, and then laid another beside it. The cards were dealt; Josiah won.

"Hurray!" he cried, and staked both bills on the next game, which he likewise won.

And so game after game went on, till five hundred dollars lay on the table. In the meanwhile the brandy had circulated freely, and Josiah's Goshen scruples were thoroughly smothered by it. It was Clarke's deal. He gave Fenton a side glance, and then dealt very rapidly. We picked up our

cards; Josiah looked at his a second with a stupid leer, and then exclaimed:

"By hookey, but this is stavin'! I'll stake my whole pile on it!" And he threw the whole roll on the table.

The cards were played; we won. Fenton swept the pile towards him. Josiah stared stupidly a moment, and then stuttered:

"Hold—hold on! You—you—don't mean to take it all?"

"Rather that way, my friend," laughed Fenton.

"But—but—fair play! Lend me something to start."

"Not much, my friend; 'a bird in the hand,' you know." And he coolly rolled up the bills.

Josiah looked at him a moment, and then suddenly springing at Fenton, he caught his throat, crying:

"You darned blasted sneak, give me my money!"

Fenton struggled, but Josiah held him fast, till the chair crushed beneath them and they fell together to the floor. Fenton was under, and Josiah, throwing himself across his breast, began dealing him powerful blows in the face. We sprang from our seats; but before we could reach them the report of a pistol rang through the room, and, with a sharp cry, Josiah fell over on the floor. We stopped short. Fenton rose to his feet; Josiah lay motionless on the floor, a dark stain spreading rapidly on his breast. For a second we stood silent, and then Clark said, in a hoarse whisper:

"Good God, Fenton, you have killed him!"

Fenton turned paler, and staggered back, muttering:

"Killed him! killed him! Go to him, Clark; I can't touch him!"

Clark knelt beside him, but before he could look at the wound the door was burst open, and a group of startled faces appeared.

"What has happened?" cried a dozen voices, as they crowded in.

Clark tried to step before the body, but they pushed him aside, and the ghastly sight lay bare before them. A second's silence, and then a wild shriek rang through the air, and a woman in a long white night-dress burst through the crowd and threw herself upon the body. It was his bride! A groan burst from Fenton's lips, and he reeled to the wall. She put her arms

around her dead husband, and, laying her face close to his, called:

"Josh, Josh, what is the matter? Why are you so cold and pale? Wake up; speak to me! It is I, Melissy! O Father above, he is dead!" And, with a wail that rings in my ears now, she fell senseless on his breast, and her long fair hair and night-dress were dabbled in his blood.

With hushed breath they carried her from the room, and then gathered around poor Josiah; but he was beyond all human aid. The bullet had passed through his breast, and all they could do was to take up his poor clay tenderly and reverently.

My story is now soon told. Fenton was arrested and tried, but he escaped on the plea of self-defence, and left the country; Clark went with him. Poor Melissy never recovered from the shock. Her friends were discovered by her baggage, and sent for. They came, and did all that love could do to lift her from her depth of desolation; but in vain. The shock had been too great for her placid rustic brain, and three weeks from the date she left her home a happy bride, she returned to it a hopeless maniac. And in regard to myself; of course the part that I played in the tragedy was made public. I was discharged by my employers in disgrace, and obliged to throw myself upon the love and mercy of my heart-broken parents. For a long time I avoided all my fellow-creatures; I felt that the mark of Cain was upon my brow, and my only rest beneath the sod beside poor Josh. But I was young, and time dimmed the cruel sharpness of the memory. My changed conduct brought me friends and prosperity, and to the world the past seemed atoned for; but to me it never can be. Years have passed; I am a happy husband and father, but memory still avenges herself; and often as I put out my arms to embrace my wife, the blood-stained form of poor Melissy will rise between us, and I will feel that only in the grave can I forget that night's work.

## ONE WOMAN'S WORK.

BY ADA L. FLETCHER.

THE sun was just gilding with his last rays the windows of the mansion on the hill, making them one glare of golden glory, resting lightly on the tops of the tall locusts that surrounded the house, and making the twilight seem denser on the houses in the valley, when Judge Langdon came slowly up the village street. Weary with the clamor and noise, the drudgery and monotony of his office, his steps involuntarily grew quicker, and his brow cleared, as he drew nearer the haven of peace and happiness he called home. And as he rested his hand upon the latch of the rustic gate, there came the quick patter of childish feet down the gravelled walk, a flash of white robes through the shadows, and in a moment a pair of bare dimpled arms were about his neck, and a peal of silvery childish laughter rang out on the stillness.

"Beat you again, did she, Howard?" said the judge, kindly, as he laid his hand on the curly head of his son, who had followed more slowly.

"She always beats," said the boy, with a little discontent in face and voice.

"Well, well, Howard," said his father, "a boy who is studying Latin and algebra can't be expected to fly like a hummingbird, who doesn't do anything all day but play with the other birds and flowers."

"Now, papa," said the child in his arms, looking laughingly into his face, "that's not fair! You should just hear me reading history to mamma, and she says I am doing very well in my other studies."

"How is mamma, Zoe?" asked the judge, a shadow coming over his face.

"She doesn't feel well at all this evening," said Zoe, her own face clouding, "and Amy has been bathing her head."

They had arrived at the base of the broad stone steps by this time, and Zoe sprang from her father's arms, and up them, two at a bound, to herald his coming. The judge paused for an instant as he reached the piazza to look out upon the surroundings of his beautiful home, and a proud smile crossed his haughty face, as he thought, "This is all mine. Gained by

my hand-to-hand struggle with Fortune."

He had always been a proud man, even in the days of his youth and poverty, and he had every reason to be proud of the wealth and reputation that were his now in his prime of life. He was honorable and true-hearted, as proud, his only fault being an overweening ambition, and a proneness to be influenced by flattery. While he mused upon the porch, a light touch fell upon his arm, and he turned to greet the pretty blushing face of his oldest child, sweet Amy Langdon, who, though scarcely fourteen years had passed lightly over her head, bore now the responsible position of housekeeper at Hillside during her grandmother's absence, for her mother was a confirmed invalid.

"Tea is almost ready, papa," she said, as he kissed her fondly, "and mamma is waiting for you."

They passed into the house together, she looking up at him with the almost worshipful trust and reverence it is so beautiful to see in the face of a child towards parents, and together they reached the couch where Annie Langdon, the wife and mother, now passed the days that would have been weary painful ones but for the love and attentive sympathy of her husband and children. It was the custom now for them all to gather about their mother, since she could not join them at the evening meal, while she ate her light repast, and all was pleasant bustle, until everything was arranged to suit the notions of "old maid Amy," as Zoe called her, who was somewhat methodical in all her ways. The hour was passed in delightful conversation. Each of the three children had something new to tell papa, and he entered with interest into all their plans and projects, from Amy's, to have a new summer-house built, to Zoe's new playhouse under the apple tree. This family had always been a standing wonder to the village people, who had never seen such perfect sympathy between parents and children, and it was truly rare. All this was unmixed delight to the younger children; but there was the shadow of a great sorrow over it all to the

judge and Amy, who saw how much paler had grown the wife and mother's cheek, and how much lighter the fragile form, in the last month. They knew that ere long the little circle would be broken, and the one dearest and best beloved be taken away from them. The thought brought agony unspeakable. Amy, who was very mature and womanly for her years, had given up hope with the last hemorrhage, that brought the sufferer so near the river of death, and now only tried to make her last hours happy. But in spite of his superior age and wisdom, her father still hoped against hope, and could not give her up.

Mrs. Langdon had long ago resigned herself to the thought of death, and while looking with tearful eyes at those so dear to her, whom she must leave behind, felt so sure and bright a hope of heaven that no word of sorrow or complaint escaped her lips. And at such hours as this she was as cheerful and happy in her husband's and children's society as if the death angel had not already his icy hand upon her.

"Our tea is ready now, papa," said Amy, when her mother had finished, and Zoe had eaten the bit of toast left upon the plate, thinking, childlike, it was better, "because it had been made for mamma." Judge Langdon placed his arm about his daughter, and they went into the pleasant dining-room, and sat down to the well-spread table, over which little Amy had learned to preside "almost as well as mother"—words of praise from her father that brought the quick tears to her eyes.

"Well, I know I wish grandma would come home," said Zoe, as she pushed back her plate. "Amy never has any buckwheat cakes, and she don't ever ask me to have another cup of tea!"

A general laugh went round the table at this, and Howard said:

"I'll bet I'll tell grandma, Zoe, that's all you want her to come home for."

"If I treated you both right, you would neither of you have tea. You'd behave better, maybe. Howard, does your teacher allow you to say 'I bet?'"

"Not have tea!" cried Zoe, with wide eyes. "That's just the way stepmothers does. Fanny Clark says their stepmother never gives them tea or coffee, either, or

else not half enough sugar. I wouldn't have such a mother."

"I hope you never will, little one, have any one to treat you that way," said her father, as he rose from the table; "but mamma must teach you to be more careful with your verbs. 'Stepmothers does' don't sound right to me."

"Zoe forgets grammar when she gets excited," said Amy; "and that is generally her condition."

Zoe shook her curls saucily at her sister, and sprang out of the door, challenging Howard to a race, and Judge Langdon joined his wife in her pleasant room.

An hour later, as he sat holding the little blue-veined hand in his, and their talk had strayed back to the halcyon days when they, as boy-and-girl lover, had plighted the troth which to-day was as pure and dear as then, and as husband and wife who truly love each other often will, they were engaged in pleasant retrospection.

"Let me see," said Mrs. Langdon, musingly. "I was attending school at Herndon, then, taught by a Mrs. Crawford, and you were studying law. What happy days those were!"

"Ah, that reminds me, Annie," said the judge, abruptly, returning to the present, "that I have a new client whose case interests me very much. You remember this Mrs. Crawford very well, do you not—and that she was a widow with an infant child when we knew her? Well, she married again soon after, and her husband, a Mr. Clark, adopted as his own this child, intending to settle his fortune upon her. The mother died within a year after the marriage, and within the last year Mr. Clark also died suddenly, and intestate. His brothers and sisters claim the estate, and this Miss Crawford, now a young lady, highly educated and accomplished, comes to me for advice. She is staying with her aunt now at the Acton House."

"And what do you think about her case?" asked Mrs. Langdon, with the affectionate interest she always manifested in anything that interested her husband.

"Hopeless," was his answer. "It appears that the adoption was merely an informal one; as there was no will, she has no claims whatever on the estate. So, after being reared in affluence, with the expectation of wealth, the young lady is left penniless. And to add to the distress

of her situation, some of her stepfather's relations have tried to asperse her good name. I feel very sorry for her, Annie."

"I did not like Mrs. Crawford," said Mrs. Langdon. "It seems to me there was some story about her, also; but one should not allow that to prejudice one against the daughter. What can we do for her, Carrol?"

"I have been thinking, Annie," said her husband. "You know we have never been satisfied with the schools here for our children, and your own health is too bad to attend to their studies yourself, and I think it would be advisable for us to have a governess. Miss Crawford has a diploma from one of our best schools, and has almost perfect manners. What do you think about engaging her, Annie, in that capacity?"

"It is a serious thing, Carrol," said his wife, "to put our children into any one's hands but our own, and we should know the person very well. But all you have said is true. I know our children, especially Zoe, need more careful attention than I am able to give them, and I have been thinking myself of speaking to you about obtaining a governess. I should like to see the young lady first, though. This story about her, Carrol, what was it?"

"Pshaw, Annie! one glance at her will be enough to assure you of the falseness of any charge against the modesty of such a girl. You needn't think for a moment about that. What do you say?"

And the judge bent and kissed the snowy cheek of the wife he almost idolized. She looked up at him with a trusting loving smile.

"Of course you are right, Carrol, and I will send Amy round with you to call upon her with a view to engaging her. I wish I were able to go myself."

"I wish you were, darling." And Carrol Langdon pressed the slight form close to his heart. For these two were as much lovers now as ever in the days gone by. Theirs had been a perfect marriage of souls, and not one inharmonious note had ever marred the grand anthem of their lives. Though now there were minor chords of sadness, caused by that paling cheek and brightening eye, the burden of their life-song was still joy and peace. Alas! how few such blended lives there are. How many are marred and made miserable for time and eternity, by warring

against the laws of nature and God, and joining their lives to one so totally dissimilar that happiness is impossible.

## CHAPTER II.

THE morning dawned as brightly as June morning could be. At breakfast Judge Langdon told Amy he wished her to attend him in a call upon a Miss Crawford, who was stopping at the hotel.

"Which hotel, papa?" asked Zoe, who was a somewhat privileged character in this happy household. She was happy this morning in the return of her grandmother, Mrs. Langdon's mother, a handsome, but somewhat haughty old lady, who, for some years, had presided over her daughter's household.

"The Acton House," said the judge, in answer to his daughter's query.

"Then I don't like her," said Zoe, promptly. "She's pretty, and she dresses nice, but she's got eyes just like Amy's cat that ate my bird, and there aint any eyebrows; and yesterday, when I was over there with Lulu Acton, and we were seeing which could jump furthest off the steps, she said something about 'tomboys,' and I know she meant us."

"You talk too much for a little girl, Zoe," said her father, with one of his rare frowns. "Grandma will have to take you in hand, I think."

"Miss Crawford was right," said Mrs. Marcy. "If you were jumping off the steps, you were tomboys."

Zoe did not speak again, but her lip quivered, and tears stood in the bright brown eyes. The nice breakfast was untouched; and when her father and Amy started, for the first time in her life, she did not go with them to the gate for the good-by kiss that each member of the household conceded as the right of the baby and pet. But in her mother's arms she sobbed out her trouble.

"I didn't like her a bit, mamma, and now she has made papa scold me, I just hate her! She has got eyes like a cat, and papa never told me not to talk before—and I'm not a tomboy. O dear! O dear!"

"My little Zoe must not hate any one," said the sweet voice that had calmed all her childish griefs. "And you must not say unkind things of any one. Papa was just a little vexed about something else

this morning, I expect. He will love his birdie just as well as ever when he comes home. You must treat the young lady kindly when she comes, Zoe darling."

"Is she coming *here*, mamma?"

"Yes—would you not like to have a governess?"

"No, mamma, I wouldn't; and, mamma, would it be right to act as if I liked her when I didn't?" And the clear earnest eyes looked wonderingly into her mother's.

Ah, little Zoe! You have not learned yet the lessons of deceit society teaches. When you are a few years older, you will learn to dissemble with the rest of the world, and speak fair words when the heart is full of bitterness.

When Judge Langdon sent his card up to Miss Crawford, she kept them waiting but a few minutes, and then came in with a graceful apology. She was certainly fine-looking, and her face almost perfect in feature. Her hair, of a rich auburn, was coiled in massive coils at the back of her finely-shaped head, but would escape in soft careless curls about her face and neck. Her form was well-developed and commanding, and her manner dignified but easy; but to a childish eye, unused to affectation, the ease seemed more studied than natural. As Zoe had said, her eyes spoiled the effect of her face, being of that cold light gray that always seems hiding secrets. The lashes and eyebrows were so many shades lighter than the hair, that it did seem to Amy that Zoe had spoken the truth when she said, "There are no eyebrows." The thin lips carried out the verdict the eyes had pronounced, and altogether it was a soulless face. But there was a subtle charm about the woman that sways more than mere beauty—a flat-tery in her very movements, that even exercised itself over Amy before she had been in her presence many moments. Judge Langdon's errand was soon explained, and the young lady was overwhelmed with gratitude. "Indeed, Judge Langdon was *too* kind. He could not know just how destitute she had felt that morning." And the rich lace handkerchief covered the eyes which the judge and Amy could not know were tearless and triumphant.

Then Amy told her that as her mother was an invalid, she would like to have her come and spend a few days at Hillside

before her duties really commenced, in order that they might know each other better.

"Ah yes, they did not know how glad she would be to do this, for her aunt was compelled to return to her post as teacher that very day, and she had not known where to turn. If they would excuse her a moment, she would be ready to go with them now." And she departed, leaving Amy in rather a dazed condition, and the judge more pleased with his "client" than ever. Soon she reappeared in a tasty walking-suit, and the trio set out together. When they reached the house, the young lady paused in silent admiration of the scene, and while Amy went in to prepare her mother for the arrival, the other two stood together in a silence that was broken at last by a long-drawn sigh, and—"O Judge Langdon, how happy a family must be to dwell in the midst of so much beauty! How much better a girl I might have been had I had such a home!"

The eyes she turned to meet his were wet with tears, and under their influence looked almost a dewy blue. The face was a very sad and a very pretty one just then, and the judge felt very sorry for her indeed. He spoke cheeringly.

"You must not give way to sad thoughts, Miss Crawford. If my daughters grow up as self-reliant, yet modest, girls as yourself, I shall be satisfied."

The round cheek glowed, and there was a gratified gleam under the long light lashes.

Mrs. Langdon met Miss Crawford with her usual kind politeness, and the young lady, as she clasped the slight hand in hers, kissed the invalid's cheek, and murmured:

"I shall love you dearly."

The pink glow called up by excitement deepened into crimson on Annie Langdon's cheek. Though a very affectionate and loving woman in her own family, to strangers she was rather reserved; and this kiss from a woman she had never seen before, shocked more than it gratified her. And a little figure, hid within the deep bay window opposite, shook with suppressed passion. "How dare she kiss my mother?"

But Miss Crawford seemed unconscious of having done anything unusual, and Judge Langdon, having performed the

ceremony of introduction, went back to his office, well satisfied. The native power of the woman soon asserted itself, and Mrs. Langdon could not help being pleased with the deference and yet dignity of her manner. But when, after an hour's pleasant conversation, Amy took Miss Crawford into the parlor, Zoe crept from her hiding-place, and standing by her mother's side, slyly rubbed the spot upon her cheek the lady's lips had touched.

"Why, Zoe," laughed Mrs. Langdon, "what do you mean?"

"I want it off—I want it off," said the excited child. "I can't kiss you till it's off."

"Why, my darling, it won't hurt either of us. Come here to mamma, and let her talk to you about it."

But Zoe was too excited to be still, and soon slipped away, and out in the hall which Amy and Miss Crawford were just crossing.

"Why, you are the little girl I saw at the hotel yesterday," said the latter, laying her hand on Zoe's brown curls.

"Yes," said straightforward Zoe. "I am the girl you said was a tomboy yesterday."

"Why, what a good memory you have, little one! If you remembered me so well, why did you not come to speak to me?"

"Because I did not like you," was the more truthful than polite answer.

"Why, Zoe," said the mortified Amy, as the child sprang away.

"Let her alone, dear," said Miss Crawford. "She is offended at a foolish speech of mine, but we shall soon be friends."

But Amy knew Zoe better.

On the following Monday Miss Crawford was regularly installed as governess in the Langdon family, and several weeks passed by very pleasantly to the whole family. No, not quite pleasantly to all. Amy and Howard soon yielded to the charm of their teacher's influence, and soon implicitly trusted and relied on her friendship. Mrs. Langdon was very much pleased with her mode of teaching, and the judge was more and more delighted with her. With the keen insight of women of her class of mind, she soon found out the weak side of his character, and so played upon it that she blinded his eyes to all else but her graces of mind. But Zoe was inflexible. She never yielded one inch in her hatred of

her teacher, or allowed herself to be flattered into anything like a friendship with her. She studied well, and recited her lessons to the governess, simply because her mother wished her to do so; but it was automaton-like, and without the life and animation that had always characterized her recitations. We cannot say why, but it was given to the eight-year-old child to read the nature of this woman, and discern the serpent hidden there, far better than any of the older and wiser minds about her, unless we except Mrs. Marcy, who looked upon her from the first with cold distrust.

One evening, about a month after Miss Crawford's arrival at Hillside, Judge Langdon left the parlor, whither he had been called to listen to a new song of Amy's, and entered his wife's room, to find her sitting by the window, through which came the perfume of the roses. With the well-known deceitfulness of her disease, there were days when she felt strong, and almost well, and now her cheek was stained with crimson, and her blue eye bright as in her girlhood. Her mother sat beside her, and between them nestled Zoe, who slipped quietly out of the room as her father entered. There never had been the same relations between this strange child and her father since Miss Crawford's coming. Already the breach was made that after a while should widen into an almost impassable gulf.

"Why, Annie, are you not afraid, dearest, to sit by that open window?"

"O Carroll! I was longing so for a breath of the summer air, and the sight of the roses. It won't hurt me, I know."

"Let me take you in my arms, darling, and carry you out on the piazza. It will hurt you less than sitting here. Wrap her up well, mother." And he lifted the fragile form as if it had been a child's. Out on the piazza, Annie Langdon sat leaning her cheek against her husband's shoulder, and looking at the purple and gold of the sunset.

"It is the sunset of life with me, Carroll," she whispered. "And the only pain is leaving you and my children. I want to talk with you about the children, dear. I am not afraid that you will not always be good to them, but Zoe is such a peculiar child. I feel as if God were going to give my soul that mission—to still guard my

baby. And I want you to promise to still let her be my child, Carrol, and never to do anything in regard to her that you think will grieve the spirit of her mother. Promise, Carrol."

The blue eyes looking up into his had a strange inspired gleam in their clear depths, and seemed almost to command the promise that came from his lips. And so the strange compact was made. Before anything else was said, the rest of the family had gathered about them, all rejoicing to see "mamma out." And well they might all remember it! For ere the morning-sunbeams shot into the east windows of the white house on the hill, Death was there. He had kissed the gentle lips, and smoothed the pain-drawn brow, folded the hands that had never grown weary working good, and borne to heaven the pure sweet soul of Annie Langdon. As her life ebbed away in a crimson tide from her lips, she had them all called about her—for speech was already gone, and she could only look at them with her soulful eyes, saying more precious tender things than tongue could have spoken. Carrol Langdon supported his dying wife in his arms, his eyes bent upon her, as if his very loving glance could keep life in the frail form. The aged mother held tenderly her daughter's hand, but did not weep. Amy and Howard knelt sobbing by the bedside. But Zoe—little Zoe, wakened from the sound sweet sleep of childhood by her father's tears upon her face, threw herself in a paroxysm of grief upon the bed, crying with every breath; "O mamma, don't die! don't die!"

O God, pity the motherless! wherever in all thy earth they may be found. Thou alone canst raise their souls from the dark valley of desolation, where only an orphan's feet can tread!

I will not linger upon those first months of utter sorrow, nor attempt to describe the daily life of those bereft. Miss Crawford, who knew that Mrs. Marcy did not like her, would have left the house, and found a boarding-place elsewhere, and taught Judge Langdon's children with others in a small select school, but to this he would not hear. She had almost made her presence indispensable to Amy and Howard. With ready tact, she knew just where a word of consolation would be appreciated, and when "silence was golden,"

and by degrees the whole household were won by her tearful sympathy into a belief in her goodness and purity. All but Zoe. For weeks after her mother's death she went about the house with a strange look upon her face—an old saddened look that should have belonged only to the face of one who has watched every hope and friend into the grave—shunning even her father's presence. Her grandmother only could comfort her, and she not by words. The child would creep to her side very often, and simply lay her head upon her knee, while the hand that had so often rested on her mother's head, gently caressed hers, and the great brown eyes that had been so full of happiness and joy, so brimful of exuberant mischief, would put on a far-away glorified look, as if she whose pure soul was yet so much like the angels, was permitted to gaze into the heaven her mother had entered.

Zoe was strangely changed, but not in her feelings towards Miss Crawford. It was evident to the most casual observer that the young lady's presence was positive pain to the child, who shrank from her touch as from a serpent. Was it not a premonition? the first shadow of the fast-darkening future? Her father never reproached her for it though, even when Miss Crawford came to him with tearful regrets that she "could not win Zoe's love." For he remembered too well that last charge, solemn and strange, of his dead wife, and all through that first year of widowhood she was nearer to him than all the world—even sleeping nestled in his arms at night, and comforting him by even her silent presence; and when thought grew too painful to be borne alone, he would arouse her, to talk with him of the dear one "loved and lost."

### CHAPTER III.

Two years went slowly by, for time will move though the heart stand still with agony. Carrol Langdon plunged with every month deeper into politics, and was at last, by unanimous vote of his district, elected to a seat in Congress. Miss Crawford was now principal of the young ladies seminary in the village. The pleasant home at Hillside was still a pleasant home, though the sweet presiding angel was gone.

On the afternoon that the result of the

election was announced, Amy and Howard came home from school with proud exultant faces, but Zoe's step was heavy and unelastic, and her face sullen instead of joyous.

"What ails you, little daughter of Senator Langdon?" said Howard as she would have passed as they stood about their grandmother in the hall. "Don't you want to go to Washington?"

"No," she answered, shortly. "And I don't want papa to go."

"Why, Zoe?" said Amy, "why not?"

"Because," she answered, "because when he goes to Washington he will take Miss Crawford with him!"

"Why, Zoe Langdon, how dare you even hint such a thing?" cried Amy. "I do not believe a word of it!"

Just then the library door opened and Judge Langdon stood in their midst.

"What is it you do not believe, Amy?" he asked.

The girl hesitated a moment, then said boldly, "That you are going to give Miss Crawford my mother's place."

"Come in here, all of you—I want to talk to you."

They followed him into the library, and when there he told them in as few words as possible, that what Zoe had said was true. "Miss Crawford has promised to be my wife, and as nearly as possible fill the place of your mother to you." You are all old enough to look reasonably at this matter, and though it may grieve you, you know me well enough to know that I will permit no unkind treatment of my wife!"

They were all very still while he was speaking, but when he was through, Amy who had been struggling with her feelings, could restrain them no longer, and sprang to her father's side with uplifted pleading face.

"O papa, don't so soon—so soon give her my dead mother's place! I will work so hard, dear papa—"

He interrupted her with—"You talk like a child, Amy—I did not expect this from you. Let me hear no more of it."

The girl shrank back from the cold words as if from a blow, and felt as if she were dying, as she stood there. Then Mrs. Marcy arose with the dignity of age, still holding Zoe's colorless face against her breast, and spoke very calmly, telling him if he thought he could be happier, she was for him, but

proudly—"When Hillside gets a new mistress, and Annie's children a new mother, of course I must change my home."

"There is no need of that, mother," spoke the judge, hastily—"Miss Crawford herself expresses a desire that you should remain and take care of your children, and expects to derive much assistance from your advice."

The old lady did not answer, but a sarcastic smile curved her lips, for she knew why this had been said—knew that it was a part of Emily Crawford's *deplaid* plan. She said no more, but turning left the room followed by the children.

"Come to me, Zoe," said the judge, as the child passed him. The instinct of obedience was strong, and the child paused at his side, but her face was averted.

"You do not love me, Zoe," he said, sadly.

"You do not love my mamma," she said, and without looking at him left the room.

It was not many weeks until Emily Crawford called herself Judge Langdon's wife—a position for which she had aimed for months before she saw him, and for which she had schemed and planned even before the death of his gentle wife. It would be tedious were I to enumerate the many and varied arts of this youthful adept in deception to win the husband's affections from his dead idol. Suffice it that they succeeded.

Judge Langdon need have feared no violent outbreak from his children. They were too well-trained for that. But there was a coldness and estrangement between the parent and children that deepened as the days went by. They could not sympathize with him in that which formed the sole burden of his thoughts, and never again was the beautiful sympathy and trustfulness that had made this a peculiar family restored. From the day when the disclosure was made until he coldly announced the day of his nuptials, no allusion was made to the approaching event. Two days before the marriage was to take place, his wife's mother left Hillside, with many gloomy forebodings for Annie's children. Upon the wedding morning Zoe could nowhere be found, and it was not until late that evening that Amy in her tearful search, found the child with her head upon her mother's grave—her dry burning eyes fixed upon the inscription, "Annie, loved wife of Carrol Langdon." No entreaty or per-

suasion could induce her to return to the house, and just as the "happy pair" were crossing the threshold of home she flitted past them in the twilight like a wan little ghost.

In spite of his happiness, Carroll Langdon's heart gave a great throb of pain as "Annie's" child thus passed him so coldly, but the beautiful Satan at his side soon caused him to forget that. The following week the house was closed, and the entire family went to Washington.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### FIVE YEARS LATER.

IT was reception eve at Senator Langdon's elegant mansion, on one of the fashionable avenues of our capital. The house was a blaze of light from garret to basement, for Mrs. Langdon's receptions were always thronged with beauty and wit, and the "*creme de la creme*" of a republican aristocracy. The lady sat in her room alone, gazing with triumphant eyes at her own reflection in the mirror, but evidently not thinking alone of her beauty or the elegance of her attire, for there was a peculiar, almost sardonic smile curving the thin red lip. Presently she arose, and swept from the room, her velvet robe trailing heavily on the rich carpet. Ascending the stairs she paused at a door on the second floor, and rapped gently. It was opened by a beautiful girl in whose wonderfully matured face we can hardly recognize our Amy. She was dressed in a loose wrapper, her golden hair trailing loosely on her shoulders, and about the sweet face now stained with tears.

"Poor child—I am sorry for you, Amy," said her stepmother, laying her hand gently on hers. "But you must dress and go down, dear, and show this Clark Easton that you are not dying because he has deceived you—"

"I cannot, O I cannot!" sobbed the girl.

"But you must, Amy; your father commands it—that you show the world you do not care for this fellow who would have deceived and then deserted you, if we had not discovered it in time."

"But you cannot prove this," cried the girl, half defiantly.

"Will you do as your father wishes if I

can?" said Mrs. Langdon, looking keenly into Amy's pallid face.

"Yes," was the proud answer.

"Then I will put this letter in your hands. Your father and I have had it several days."

Amy took the letter, and when she had finished reading it, dropped it from her rigid fingers to the floor. It was in Clark's Easton's handwriting, addressed to a girl Amy knew, and running over with the love that she had believed only given to her. She set her dainty foot upon it, while her face was as haughty as the woman's who watched her, and whose gloved hands softly applauded the action.

"I will send Annette to dress you," she said, simply, and was gone, in her triumph forgetting the crushed note on the floor. And while Annette dressed the golden hair, and placed the robes of silk and lace on the faultless form, sweet Amy's heart was full of bitter determination. When she had dismissed the maid, and was waiting for her stepmother, the door opened and Zoe came in, her eyes like stars, and her cheeks glowing with her brisk walk from her music master's.

"O, you are going into the parlor tonight, Amy! You promised to stay with me."

"I know I did, Zoe, dear," said Amy, as she kissed her fondly. "But it is papa's wish that I go."

"I don't believe it," said the child, impetuous as ever. "I don't believe he knows or cares anything about it. I know she says so, but how you can believe or listen to her is more than I know."

"Hush, Zoe! you mustn't talk so. Papa does not love me, and he does not think I love him."

"It's all her work," said Zoe, with a backward toss of her head that sent her brown curls flying. "She's been in here lately—I can tell by the very air."

Springing to the window, she threw it open, and let the winter wind sweep through the luxurious room. In spite of her trouble, Amy could not help laughing.

"You were always prejudiced, little sister."

"Instinctively," said Zoe, crossing to her sister's side; and as she did so, she picked up the letter, and carelessly threw it on the sofa. "You are my queen, Amy," she said, placing her hands crown-

like on her sister's brow; "but you are blind! blind!"

Before Amy could question her meaning, Mrs. Langdon came in.

"Mercy! who opened the window?" she exclaimed, as the cold air struck her face.

"I did," Zoe answered, seating herself on the sofa as she spoke.

"Do you want to die, child?"

"I am not afraid to die," answered Zoe; "are you?"

"You are a queer child. Are you ready, Amy?" said the lady, with a shudder. "You had better let me take the letter I showed you. Your father may ask for it."

"I don't care," said Amy, wearily. "It is here on the floor, I believe."

But when they came to look for it, it was gone, and Zoe sat looking out from her long lashes wickedly, enjoying her stepmother's anxiety. She had no idea of the importance of the paper she held, nor dreamed of its purport; but, as she said, "it seemed to be instinctive with her to desire to thwart every wish of her stepmother concerning her sister or herself;" and having heard Amy say she "did not care," it was her delight to hide the paper, and became absorbed in her book. At last they gave up the search, and when they were gone Zoe laughed maliciously to herself, thinking, "I'll see what the letter could be, to cause madam's smooth brow to wear such a frown." When she had finished reading it, she sprang to her feet, her face white with anger.

"The mean wretch! Clark Easton no more wrote that letter than I did; and I'll prove it to Amy, and thwart her evil plans to-night, or my name is not Zoe Langdon."

It was the work of a few minutes to change the simple schooldress for one more suitable for evening; then to brush out the bronze-brown hair that fell far below her waist in waves of burnished gold, and tie it back with a scarlet ribbon. There was evidently no vanity in Zoe's composition, judging from the business-like way in which she brushed the hair that made the little girl the envy of many a Washington belle. Ah, little Zoe! If you were as free from other passions as from envy, the mother who watches above you might well be proud of her child.

When she was dressed, she took the letter in her hand, and then from her writing-

desk several other rather dingy-looking scraps of paper, and ran rapidly down the stairs to the reception-room. It was a brilliant scene, but Zoe's eyes were accustomed to it, and ran rapidly from group to group. Amy was the centre of an admiring circle, and Mrs. Langdon stood not very far from the door, still receiving the late arrivals.

"Who is that little sprite who looks as if she were just from elf-land?" said a young lady, who was leaning against one of the marble pillars, talking to a young officer.

Captain Easton's sad face brightened as the child came further into the room, and he exclaimed:

"Why, it is my little friend Zoe! If you will excuse me, I will see if I can do anything for her."

A few moments later Mrs. Langdon's eyes opened wide with astonishment as Zoe passed her on the young officer's arm, her brilliant face turned laughingly up to his.

"A young *debutante!*" said the gentleman she was just then receiving.

"She does as she pleases," said the lady, with an expressive shrug of her shoulders.

Out in the hall, whither she had led her companion after the circuit of the room, Zoe's manner suddenly changed, and she faced Captain Easton with a dignity that would have been amusing if it had not been so earnest.

"Read that," she said, placing the letter in his hand, "and tell me what you think of it."

He had not read more than a dozen lines before his face told her as much as she wanted to know, before his exclamation:

"Good heavens, Zoe! where did this come from?"

Then she placed those other scraps in his hand, and said, "Look at these, now, and you will see where the letter came from; and you know best, perhaps, why you have such an enemy."

The scraps were the first attempts in copying Captain Easton's handwriting, in the hand of Zoe's stepmother, blown from her window a few mornings previous.

"Wait here a moment now," said Zoe. "I will see you again."

Back through the rooms she sped, with a saucy bow or smile for her numerous friends, until she reached her sister's side.

"Please excuse my sister a moment,"

sue said to Amy's partner; and the two went down the long room together, winning many an admiring glance.

Amy was almost wild with apprehension, for her thoughts turned at once to her wild young brother at West Point.

"What is it, Zoe?" she queried, as they reached the hall.

"Ask Clark Easton," she said. And with a merry laugh, sprang up the stairs, leaving the lovers alone together.

That night when Amy came up to her room, she knelt beside the bed, and looked long and earnestly at the face of her sleeping sister. In sleep it lost the old bitter look and mocking smile that had become habitual to it, and was as purely childlike as when her mother left her good-by kiss upon it.

Amy's tears fell like rain above the unconscious sleeper; and when little Zoe awoke next morning, she found only two tear-stained notes upon her pillow—one for her father, one for herself. Sweet Amy was gone! fled from her father's house as the wife of Clark Easton, the man she loved. The note to Zoe was long and sorrowful—telling why and wherefore she had done this, and asking her sister to forgive her for leaving her alone. "But you are stronger than I, and I cannot bear this life any longer." Clark was ordered to a distant frontier station, and Amy would go with him.

The other note Zoe did not read. It was a simple notification of her flight, that her father might know she had left his house honorably.

Zoe did not shed a single tear, but there was a strange light in her eyes as she met her father in the hall that morning, and placed the note in his hand. He read it through without a trace of emotion in his face, then raised his hand toward heaven. But before the words escaped his lips, Zoe's little hand sealed them. She did not speak a word, but as he looked in her eyes the strong man trembled as with an ague, and lifting her out of his way, passed into the room and locked the door.

There was an insolent triumph in the very sweep of Mrs. Langdon's silk as she passed Zoe for weeks. If she had not succeeded in making Amy unhappy in one way, she had in another, and driven her almost an outcast from her father's house. She could have had no object in all her

manceuvres to prevent the marriage, but to make Amy miserable, whom she hated for her beauty, which was eclipsing her own. Senator Langdon had known nothing but what she told him, for the estrangement between him and his children was so complete, that he scarcely ever spoke to them on any subject. While he was made to believe that his children were his enemies, they thought that he hardly knew of their existence. So Mrs. Langdon rejoiced in her success.

Zoe said but little, but very often when the brown lashes suddenly veiled her eyes, could Mrs. Langdon have seen the look hidden thereby, she might well have trembled. Zoe knew her power—knew that her father had an almost superstitious reverence for the promise he had made her dead mother concerning her, and knew that whatever she did, she was safe from his active displeasure. Mrs. Langdon knew it, too, and it increased her dislike for the child, while mingled with it was a half-defined fear—a feeling that in some way Zoe was to be the means of harm to her. And beneath the careless exterior of this child of fifteen was an unfaltering purpose, which had grown to be the great aim of her life; that her hand should unveil the arch deceiver to her father's eyes—should show him the serpent he had cherished in his bosom. And the little brown fingers were gathering up evidence, link by link, that was to effect her purpose.

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## CHAPTER V.

So the months drifted by. Zoe heard often from Amy, who was well and happy, so her mind was at rest about her. But she was greatly troubled about her brother, who was, as we have said, at West Point. Naturally of a wild restless disposition, chafing against all rules and restraints, more than either of the others, during the past five years Howard had missed his mother's control, and he had fared but ill since he was placed at school. His lightest faults were dwelt upon and magnified by the woman who called herself his mother, so that they became almost crimes in his father's eyes. In this his second year at the academy, he had been twice threatened with dishonorable expulsion, and each time he was loaded with reproaches and threats, until the naturally

tender heart of the boy was almost broken, and then he became hardened and reckless. For weeks Zoe had heard no word from him, and her heart was heavy with anxiety. One Sunday evening she went up to her room for her hymn-book, just at dusk; she was going to evening service with one of her young friends, who awaited her in the parlor. When she entered some one sprang up from the window, and Zoe started back in alarm. But the next moment Howard's arms were around her, and his voice begging her to be calm, not to betray him. Recovering her presence of mind in a moment, she drew him to a seat; and fearing lest her prolonged absence would be noticed, whispered, "Be quiet, and wait," and went down stairs again with a wildly throbbing heart, but calm face and voice.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Jeanie," she said to her friend, "but I have concluded not to go to church."

"Nonsense, Zoe!" said her stepmother. "I see no reason why you should not go."

"I see no reason why I should go when I do not want to," said the girl, contemptuously, and followed her friend to the door. Then she went back to her room.

"O Howard!" she almost screamed at sight of him; "what ails you?"

"Expelled, Zoe, at last," was the answer, in a voice utterly unlike the boy's own.

The fact was too terrible for words, and Zoe could only stand gazing at her brother, until he said, huskily:

"For Heaven's sake, don't look at me that way, Zoe, but tell me what I am to do!"

"Come with me to papa, Howard," said the girl, with the resolution of desperation. "Tell him your story first, before she knows it, and he cannot condemn you so cruelly."

The boy raised his haggard face to his sister's.

"Tell him, Zoe? I tell you, child, before I would go to my father with the story of my disgrace, after the way he has threatened me, I would put this pistol at my head and blow out my worthless brains." And the silver-mounted pocket-pistol, pressed against the boy's fevered brow, gleamed in the moonlight. But Zoe's firm hand was upon it, and he resigned it listlessly to her keeping.

And while they stood in a painful stillness, distinctly to the ears of both there came the sound of a catlike tread in the hall outside, and the rustle of a trailing silk. Zoe sprang to the door, her eyes blazing with passion, and threw it open; but only the wind rustled the curtains of the window.

"The trail of the serpent is here, Howard," she said, picking up a lace handkerchief that lay at her feet. "And it is too late for you to see our father first."

"Give me the pistol, Zoe, and I will end all this trouble," cried the boy. "I have sworn to kill myself rather than be disowned by my father."

Zoe fixed her clear brown eyes upon him.

"Howard—brother," she said, "do you not know 'tis only the coward who calls death to his aid? Are you—a man with all the world before you, afraid to face that world? Even if papa disowns you, you yet have your future in your own hands."

"I tell you, Zoe, I am not like you. I cannot bear trouble."

And then his voice died away, for distinctly to the ears of both there came the sound of another tread in the hall; this time a firm decided step, that paused at their door.

"I will see him first, Howard," said Zoe; and in another moment she stood face to face with her father.

"Go down stairs, Zoe," he said, roughly, throwing the clinging hand from his shoulder. "I will see your brother alone."

"One word, papa," she pleaded; but he almost lifted her aside, and entering the room, locked the door behind him.

Clasping her trembling hands together, still holding the pistol, Zoe crouched by the side of the door, listening to the storm of words that followed—listening till her brain reeled and her heart grew sick, so well she knew the natures of the two. Presently a hand fell on her shoulder.

"O what is it, Zoe?" asked the musical treacherous voice of her stepmother. "I was so frightened! Your father heard voices in your room. I tried to prevent his coming—"

Zoe sprang up, her eyes blazing with almost the fierceness of insanity.

"Don't touch me, woman, and don't speak to me!" she almost hissed; "or before God I shall be tempted to kill you! I

wonder why I do not, as you stand there gloating over your work?" And the pistol in the girl's hand clicked ominously. "But no, death is too good for you. Your fate is better still, and it is near at hand! Be still now, and listen." And with supernatural strength the small hand closed over the jewelled fingers, crushing the rings into the fair white flesh, and holding the woman there. They had not long to listen, for even then Judge Langdon's hand was on the latch, and as the door opened his sneering voice was distinctly heard.

"It is all very well to talk of killing yourself, but young men of your stamp scarcely ever rise to that. A life of beggary even is preferred."

With a wild cry Zoe sprang past her father, but too late! The report of the pistol her brother had held in reserve rang through the house, and the bright handsome boy, with his tender blue eyes and golden hair so like his mother's, his quick eager mind but yesterday so full of aspirations for the future—his loving impulsive heart, that even to the last throbbed with love for the father who so cruelly misunderstood and wronged him—fell a lifeless corpse at that father's feet! And his soul—the soul that was so "pure and unspotted from the world" when his mother kissed her boy for the last time, was sent by his own rash hand to the judgment bar of God.

"Who shall answer for this soul?" asked Zoe, lifting her face in its awful icy calm from her dead brother to where stood the two, struck dumb with horror. Then she lifted her clasped hands to heaven.

"O God, I pray thee, if thou art the God our mother deemed thee, let thy judgment, swift and sure, fall upon the one most guilty!"

And with this prayer ringing in their ears, in that strange wild voice, Judge Langdon, stern and proud to the last, with his guilty, cowering wife, left Zoe alone with her dead.

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## CHAPTER VI

It was a strange household who lived in the stately Langdon mansion after that dreadful night. The senator himself, his friends all said, was strangely broken since

the suicide of his son. The proud commanding form was bent as with a grievous burden, the handsome face was heavily marked with care, and the abundant brown hair thickly sprinkled with gray. Only Zoe, who, in spite of his share in the tragedy that was seared into brain and heart, yet loved and pitied her father, understood that it was not that alone which was working such a change. She knew that his faith in the woman he had so loved was shaken to its foundations; that "rumor, with its thousand tongues," was whispering in his ears stories of her falsehood, so well proven that he could not doubt them.

And though Zoe's heart ached for him, yet she never faltered for one instant in her determination to unveil the whole vile life of the woman she so hated. Little by little evidence accumulated in her hands, but her father knew that it was through her means, that most of it came to him. Noiselessly but surely as one of the Fates of old the mesh was woven, that was to lay Zoe's enemy at her feet low in the dust of discovered shame and disgrace. She knew now what he did not know, that she was dragging his good name with hers through the mire of an intrigue against the government—that it was on the point of being discovered, and that his reputation and even his position as senator were tottering, only needing a breath to overthrow them. Patiently she waited for the last link to come into her hands, before she revealed the whole matter to her father.

Thus passed away the year after Howard's death. Mrs. Langdon, still beautiful, and seemingly popular as ever, after a decent mourning period, still swept her traileid skirts and carried her diamonds through the halls at the "White House" and her own beautiful rooms. Zoe did not go back to school again, and no one questioned her why or wherefore. All day long she glided through the gloomy house in her sable robes, like a haunting spirit, sending a thrill of dread through her stepmother's heart whenever she had crossed her path. Zoe's young mind, grown old in the bitter school of experience, and warped by passion and pain, had come to look upon her revenge as a sacred duty. Will not this woman have her soul also to answer for in the great reckoning day, should it be lost?

One evening, the anniversary of her brother's death, the Langdon mansion was again a blaze of light, and the beautiful hostess queen of the throng assembled there. Zoe was coming wearily down the steps to the library, when a servant, a new hand not yet drilled by his mistress, accosted her.

"Please, Miss Zoe, will you tell me where I can find Mrs. Langdon? I have a note here that the servant said needed attention immediately."

Zoe's eyes sparkled, but her manner was indifferent, as she said, "Give it to me, Carson, I will deliver it;" and went on her way slowly, until out of sight, then sped with rapid feet to her father's study door. Though Zoe had fallen greatly from her high ideas of honor, not even to gratify the absorbing and dominant purpose of her life, would she tamper with the sealed missive; but she knew the bold handwriting, and knew intuitively that this letter was the very link she needed to make the whole plot plain to her father; and so she did not hesitate to lay it before him. Stung by jealousy and shame, he did not scruple to tear it open and read it, and as he read his head drooped lower and lower until it rested on the table, while a groan of agony burst from his lips, "Ruined! ruined! lost!"

"No, papa," said Zoe's clear voice; "not lost. It is not too late to explain all this away. I have taken care of that!"

Judge Langdon looked up, his face that of an old old man, and as he met the great pitying eyes of the only child now left to him, he opened his arms, and the next moment father and child were sobbing together in a close embrace.

Long and earnest was their conversation; then Judge Langdon said:

"I can be glad of all this, now that your love is spared me, my child. Will you tell Mrs. Langdon now, that I wish to see her?" A few minutes later Mrs. Langdon was considerably startled by the entrance upon the festive scene of a little sombre figure with floating brown hair, who announced to her gravely and distinctly that her husband wished to see her. What transpired between the outraged husband and his guilty dishonored wife, Zoe never knew, but two weeks later the Langdon mansion was closed, and the family went back to the old home at Hillside. Senator

Langdon, though deeply involved by his wife in intrigue and "lobbying," was, in consideration of the extenuating circumstances with which Zoe had kept the authorities cognizant, allowed to resign, and with a broken heart, and mind and health irretrievably shattered, he was glad to return to the quiet of his village home. He clung almost childishly to Zoe, whose triumph and joy were inexpressible. But when sometimes she was alone in the room that had been her mother's, and looked up at the portrait over the mantel, the angel eyes seemed to reproach her, and try to win her back to softness and gentleness. But when she looked at another picture on the wall, a brave handsome boy of perhaps ten years, with bold flashing blue eyes and sunny hair, his arm thrown caressingly around his laughing elfin of a sister, her heart would grow hard, again, and her lips could only syllable, "My brother! my murdered brother!"

Judge Langdon came from Washington with a burning fever in his veins that brought him almost down to the river of death, and his delirium showed how all this trouble affected him. "I have borne it—borne it, Zoe, until it has eaten into my heart," he would say pitifully; but most he talked of Howard and Annie, and with tears in his softened black eyes would beg them for forgiveness.

At last there came a change for the better. Mrs. Langdon had never even asked admittance to her husband's room, and though Amy had been sent for and was there, her own ill health precluded her affording Zoe any assistance, as she had been so closely confined on the evening he was pronounced better, she left Amy in the room and ran out for a breath of air. It was dusk, but, as she passed out of the gate, she distinctly saw in the shrubbery the face of the man with whom her stepmother's name had been dishonorably connected. Though startled, she pretended not to be aware of his presence, but she knew at once its meaning—knew that her stepmother meant that night to put the finishing touch to her perfidy by an elopement with this man; and she determined to foil her plans.

After sauntering leisurely about for a while, she met the old family physician at the gate, and entered the house with him. It was the work of but a few moments to

put him in possession of the facts of the case, and ask his aid. He remained at the house that night, and at midnight was asleep on a lounge that opened out of the sick man's room. Zoe, thoroughly wearied, had been betrayed into a light slumber, also, when she was aroused by a rattling among the medicine bottles on the stand by her father's couch, and saw, standing by her father's side, her stepmother, with her husband's night draught in her hands! Once before Zoe had noticed that the medicine looked peculiar, and following her unerring instinct, had thrown it out; but she had not dreamed of a crime like this. Remembering, in the midst of her horror, that a sudden shock would be fatal to her father's reason, if not to his life, she glided to the woman's side, and while she imprisoned her with her arms, gave the signal that brought the doctor to her side. In another moment she was a prisoner. She was not allowed a word, nor did she seem to desire to speak; the whole scene was too horrible for words. And when the wretched woman was safely secured in Zoe's mother's room, as the safest place, Zoe turned to look at her father, she found his eyes fixed upon her in a dull meaningless stare, that showed plainly reason had fled! And for the first time in her life, overcome by horror and agony, Zoe fell fainting to the floor.

When the gray light of morning looked in at the windows of that gloomy room where they had secured the would-be murderer, and the first sunbeam lit up Annie Langdon's fair sweet portrait on the wall, it also fell on the pale dead face of the woman who had supplanted her in her husband's love. Dead! O fearful, yet just retribution! by her own hand, in the room where had gone out the saintlike spirit of the other, and where the murdered boy looked down at her with haunting blue eyes!

Judge Langdon did not die, but reason never returned to its throne, and he never knew all the sin of the woman he had loved so well. Amy and her husband, with their troop of merry children, live at Hillside. Zoe still clings with desperate love to the frail old man who has no life but in hers. She has asked and obtained pardon for the sin of her past life, if sin it could be called, and she looks with hopeful eyes for the happiness in heaven that was never hers on earth. A brooding sadness never leaves her eyes, because of the young spirit sent so rashly to its Maker's presence; but can she help the hope that "God, pitying, forgave?"

And this is one woman's work, and its retribution! For is it not written, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you," and "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!"

# ONLY A WOMAN.

Oliver, Marie

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Feb 1873; 37, 2; American Periodicals*

pg. 157

## ONLY A WOMAN.

BY MARIE OLIVER.

"COME, Bessie! Your father will be hungry enough when he comes into dinner, so I want you to take this basket, and run out and pick a few peas, before the sun gets very high. Here's your bonnet, and the big umbrella to shade you. Come, child, hurry along; for if you don't move faster it will be noon before you get out."

"O mother! I am so tired of this wear and tear of farm-life. It is nothing but one thing over and over." And the little sun-bonnet was tied on with a jerk, as Bessie reached out a nervous hand for the basket.

The good mother sighed softly.

"I wish things could be different, for your sake, Bessie; or else that you would accept them just as they are. You have a great many blessings to be thankful for, if you only thought so. Yet ever since you came home from boarding-school, it has been nothing but fret, fret. You don't know how you worry me, child."

"Well, mother, all the girls lived differently from what we do. They had nice

dresses and bits of ribbon. Had beaux, and were stylish. Went to parties, and all that sort of thing, while I was a mere nobody. I'm sure I'm not bad-looking; yet no one ever cares to pet me as they did Lelia Morton, my roommate at school." And a fierce throw sent the big basket rolling over the porch floor into the garden beyond, followed by the umbrella, as Bessie, her pretty face all in a frown, stood leaning against the table where the goodly week's ironing lay.

Mrs. Warner looked up reproachfully.

"Bessie! what does make you so peevish? I'm almost out of patience with you, so I shall have to scold. Now, I want those peas directly, for this afternoon our fair commences, and we must have dinner early. So put on your bonnet, and go do as I tell you. Start this moment, Bessie; for after you get that done, I want you to take little Katie out into the summer-house, where it is cool, and amuse her until dinner is ready. Come, child! I'm in earnest now."

So, with a pout and fling, Bessie went

after the basket; and with the big umbrella perched over her head, knelt down beside the fragrant pea-vines, and slowly began her task, with a pearly tear in each brown eye.

She was the eldest child of a family of six. Just eighteen, and boasting of a pretty face and small dimpled hands, even if they were browned by exposure to the wear and tear of farm-life.

For the past two years she had been finishing her education at a distant boarding-school, and since her arrival home had never ceased to mourn over her seemingly hard lot, much to her good parents' sorrow.

She had caught a glimpse of another world, as it were, while there. Had discovered the way in which wealthy people live. Had heard the stories of chattering, proud, self-conceited schoolgirls, and the knowledge of their joys was just enough to render her dissatisfied with her own lot.

Then they had dressed differently; wore brighter colors; had a score of intimate friends, and boasted of many a conquest, which made the eyes of little Bessie Warner fill with envy; just as they meant they should.

So she thought it all over as she sat among the pea-vines, slowly filling the basket, and the frown on her face deepened.

"I think," she said, "if I could only do some good in the world I would then be content. If I could only have the assurance that I had made somebody's life happier, I would not care at all about rich dresses, or conquests to boast of. I believe that there is some good in me, after all. I know I think deeply. Ellis Percy once told me he knew I was destined for something great; but perhaps he only was imposing upon my credulity, after all." And a perfect shadow of vain wonderings stole over the girlish face bending over the innocent pea-vines.

"I wish I could do something," she added, as no thought occurred to her. "I want to be just like other girls, but somehow I fail, let me try ever so hard. There! Mabel is coming to look for me. I suppose mother thinks I ought to have these finished by this time. She has no idea how hot the sun is. Yes! yes! I'm coming." And hastily gathering up her basket and umbrella, Bessie hurriedly obeyed the call of her rosy-cheeked sister, standing, in the glory of fifteen summers, just beside the old apple tree, where, in their youthful days, they had had their swing and baby-house.

As usual, Mabel was full of talk and news. "O Bessie! why can't you hurry? Everybody is talking of our fair, and almost breaking their necks to get ready, and you are not dressed at all, and are as slow as an owl. Come! mother wants those peas, so the boys can shell them; and O Bessie! we are to have a post-office at our fair, and the girls declare you must accept the position of post-mistress. I have written several letters, and mother says you had better write a few, for such a thing draws people like hot-cakes. If you say you will, I will take care of Katie a while, so she won't bother you. Come, Bessie, say yes, please."

But there was no answer; and Mabel could no longer brook the seeming stupidity. She spoke out angrily:

"What a dolt you are, Bessie! No more like me than an owl. I wish you were more like other girls! But I have something to tell you that will start you, I guess. Ellis Percy was seen drinking in old Squire Simpson's barshop last night, and when he went home he was obliged to claim assistance. What do you think of that?"

The roughly broken news had the desired effect. Bessie started quickly. A burning crimson swept over her pale cheek, and crept up into the masses of hair lying over her forehead.

"Isn't that a false report, Mabel? He has always seemed the soul of honor. Who saw him?"

"I don't know. Edith Green told me of it. But what is it to you? He never comes here, so why should you care? Are you much acquainted with him?"

"No, not much."

Ellis Percy had settled for a while in their village, and at a picnic he had had an introduction to timid Bessie Warner. After that there had been a few friendly walks by the river side, a few remarks about the unknown future, a slight token of friendship, such as a withered rose, or a tiny ribbon from her braids of hair; and then he had passed on to some one more enchanting, leaving her to go on in the same old way.

Mabel did not know this. Bessie was not one to tell of her hopes or disappointments. So the news struck a deeper blow than the younger sister was aware; and even if she had known, perhaps she would have laughed at the wound. For Mabel could boast of no sentimentality, while Bessie was always dreaming.

Yet the latter said no more. She thought that if the story was true, she already saw a way to save him; so, giving the basket of unshelled peas to her brothers, calling impatiently for them, and leaving the charge of little Katie to her sister, she ran up to her room, and taking down her writing-desk, bent with crimson cheeks over a long closely-worded letter, designed to find its way through the fair's "post-office" into the hands of her wayward friend Ellis Percy.

This being done, she dressed herself quietly, ate her dinner, and accompanied by Mabel went down to the village Town Hall, where the little fair was to be opened at three o'clock precisely.

Once there, Mabel stopped to talk, but Bessie made her way through the crowd, and when once inside the blue curtain parting off her little recess, she looked out of the narrow window soberly, as if her thoughts were not upon the piles of letters before her, or upon the loaded tables beside her, but elsewhere, known only to herself.

But the story of Ellis Percy's disgrace had rapidly spread. All about her Bessie could hear busy tongues wagging, and see heads shaken gravely, because "he was so nice," and it was "such a pity;" and all the while her cheeks burned painfully, and her eyes grew darker, as she watched the crowds surging in at the door.

She knew he would come to the fair, for he was generous and obliging, and would no doubt try to help the cause along. So she waited, and finally he came.

Pushing up to the narrow window, he thrust his handsome head beneath the blue curtain, with a merry smile, poorly accordin with his haggard eyes and pale cheeks, as he carelessly dropped a bright crisp ten-cent piece into Bessie's outstretched hand, unmindful of the curious glances bent upon him.

"Good afternoon, Miss Warner. Are there any letters for me?"

Poor Bessie started nervously. She fingered the snowy pile eagerly, then at last laid within his extended palm the letter she herself had written, and drew back to see if he would read it there. But he did not. He only dropped it into his pocket, and went away, till she lost sight of him in the crowd.

So the afternoon wore on. Bessie had been home to help her mother get tea, leaving Mabel to take her place for the time being; then in the pleasant evening she went

back and told Mabel she was ready to commence her duties once more. The young girl jumped up eagerly.

"O Bessie! Ellis Percy has been loitering round this window for an half hour, I know; and what he wants is more than I can tell, as he hasn't asked for any letters. Perhaps he has been drinking! O Bessie! what if he has? He may follow us home!"

Bessie's cheeks burnt sadly.

"Nonsense, Mabel! Don't let your imagination run away with your good sense. The fair is open to every one, and every one has a right to stand as long as they please, wherever they wish to. So let me come here now."

Mabel went out slowly. She was not quite satisfied; yet still there had been a little reason in what her sister had said. The fair was open to every one; so she ran gayly away, and the moment she had gone the blue curtain was again lifted, and this time, Bessie was confronted by Ellis Percy. At first neither spoke; then Ellis, stepping up to where the young girl sat, held out his white shapely hand as he smiled a sad smile.

"Miss Bessie, I am going away this evening in the nine o'clock train; and as I shall probably be gone a long time, I have come to say good-by; that is, if I am not intruding here."

"Going away?" And into the broad palm, four little trembling fingers stole, as the young girl rose suddenly.

"Yes,"—Ellis tried to laugh indifferently. "I got a letter from this little office this afternoon; a letter which advised me to go abroad and make a man of myself. For," he added, a red flush of shame mounting to his forehead, "every one knows I have been rather wicked of late. Yet this little letter has come like a dove of peace, and I am going to follow its advice to the very line. I know not who the writer is, but it must be a whole-souled woman! None other would have taken pains to warn such a wretch as I. And for it I shall bless her all the days of my life."

"O! I am so glad!" And out went both of Bessie's hands in her eagerness. "I knew there was something noble in you." Then she stopped. Both faces turned very white. Ellis drew back.

"Bessie," he said, "you wrote that letter?"

But Bessie only tried to hide her face in both hands. She had meant to keep her secret; and now, in her compassion, she had

made it all known. What could he think of her? He was so much older than she!

But Ellis thought nothing of that. He knew that he was standing in the presence of the only woman, beside his mother, who had ever manifested an interest as to his eternal welfare, and to him, it seemed as if he was not worthy to touch, even the hem of the spotless garment she wore. So he looked at her, as she stood there with drooping head, as if she, and not he, was the guilty one, then he went nearer.

"Bessie," he said, "I shall be gone until I make a man of myself, if I am gone years. And during that time, I shall never cease to bless you. But will you not occasionally as a friend, write me one little line? It will seem so good to hear from home."

Then Bessie put down her blushes, and looked up in her untainted womanhood.

"Ellis," she said, "you shall always be sure of my best friendship, but I cannot write to you. Please don't ask me. I have a reason, but it is not best you, or any other, should ever know. Still, in the day you become a man, I shall hope to meet you."

"And I will come back to you, Bessie, on that day," he said, passionately. "Good-by. May God bless you, even if he does not see fit to bless me. I wont ask you to write."

So they shook hands. He went away quietly, and she returned to her task just as if that parting had been no unusual occurrence, and there had been no heartache about it.

Then, after the fair had drawn to a close, people began to wonder what had become of Ellis Percy. Little Mabel Warner said she hadn't a doubt but what he had committed suicide. Others declared he must have ran away to escape the payments of his contracted debts, if he had any. But Bessie kept her own secret, well and jealously, so that no one ever mistrusted that a woman's hand, small and slender, had been the means of sending forth a poor soul to be clothed anew as a firm, honest man once more.

At first Bessie was half sorry she had refused to correspond. As the weeks slipped by she began to wonder what he was doing, and how he was getting along in his new sphere. A desire to see him, to hear him speak, possessed her. She fell to dreaming, and wondered if, when the time came, he would come back and marry her, as all heroes did in the many story books she had read. Then her cheeks began to turn pale. Her reveries became more frequent. She

thought on, till her mother began to question her, and Mabel to laugh slyly. Then she gave it all up to a wiser hand than hers, and lived on.

Still she could not help hoping that, after all, she had been of some use in the world. Had done a little good, even if she was small, and only a woman. So, now that she had showered so much lustre around some one's life-path, she was content to do whatever God willed her to do.

Mrs. Warner, her mother, tried to make everything pleasant for her. If she expressed a wish for a new dress, or a bit of ribbon, she gave it to her. If she wanted money to visit a friend, or to gratify her taste in literature, her father placed it immediately within her hand, and bade her enjoy, and please herself; while when the long hot summer days came, she was no longer sent out to work among the pea-vines, or weed the little garden. The boys did that; and Mabel ran on the long-errands, till Bessie began to wonder why it was they were all so kind to her, and to realize that her foolish heart had been given into the keeping of Ellis Percy, long before that night on which he told her she was a whole-souled woman, and he should never cease to bless her.

But it was too late to promise to give him that little line from home which he had asked for. Days had lengthened into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years, until four had gone by, and Bessie was told she could not live to see the roses fade.

Consumption had laid its hand upon her. It was useless to mourn, or to ask to be allowed to longer wait. Her allotted time had spent itself, so one fair morning Bessie grew tired, and turning her head among her snowy pillows, slept.

There was great grief in the farmhouse when a woman's lamp of life went out. There was a great deal of rushing frantically about. A heavy treading to and fro, and then they took up the still form one pleasant morning, and mournfully wound over the hill to the city of the dead.

There were many mourners, but none so sincere as a tall noble-browed man, bending over the coffin lying upon its black pall just underneath the willows hanging above the open grave.

There was a world of reverence shining out of his tearless eyes. His head was bared. A single white rosebud nestled in his button-hole. This he took, and bending over the

silent sleeper, laid it among her tresses tenderly.

Then he rose up with the rest, and looked on while they laid her away. After the last sod was replaced, the last mourner gone, he went back and knelt down at its head, unmindful of the old sexton leaning on his well-worn spade. His lips trembled, but if he spoke, no word was heard. It was utter silence in the quiet churchyard. Then he got up and went away, not knowing that he was observed, or that the old sexton had recognized him as *Ellis Percy the wanderer*. But

he had kept his word. A woman's hand only, had changed the whole current of his being; and now that he was indeed a man, he had come back to find—what? only a fair, sweet, cold, dead face hidden forever, and a tiny shaft of white marble at the dear innocent head.

The cherished dream of his life must forever remain unfulfilled; and so he went his way into the world once more, bearing the recollection of one who had been all the world to him, while to others she had simply been “only a woman.”

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# OUR CAT.

DR. DITSON

*Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893): Sep 1870; 32, 3; American Periodicals*  
pg. 293

# OUR CAT.

BY DR. DITSON.

It might be supposed, by our young readers, that a great deal could not be said about the *cat*; but such is not the case. Tales of its affectionate disposition, its sagacity, its neatness, its patience, might be multiplied; while the reverence with which it has been regarded in some countries, and the superstitious fear with which it has been looked upon in others, actually border the realms of the marvellous and elicit our wonder and surprise.

The origin of the domestic cat has not been ascertained. Some believe it to be from the wild cat, *Felis catus*; but there are so many reasons why this should not be so the learned in these matters have mostly abandoned that idea. I might say that the objections rest principally upon the fact, that it is always much smaller than the wild cat; whereas, according to the usual laws of domestication, it should be larger if derived from that source. Then again, those of the domesticated race forced into the wild state have had progeny that did not indicate any "tendency to return to the type of the true wild cat."

Another opinion has been entertained by naturalists, which is, that our household pet was derived from the *Felis manulata*, or gloved cat of North Africa, a species discovered by Ruppell; but the learned paleontologist, Owen, has decided to the contrary by showing that the teeth differ in an essential degree. The ideas of the distinguished Mr. Darwin, on this subject, I am unable to give here.

Our word cat probably comes from the Latin *catus*; and this last, I think, was derived from the Arabic. If this supposition be correct, it may lead us into the Orient for the birthplace of our little feline friend. We know, at least, that at a very remote period, the cat was regarded in Egypt with a respect that amounted almost to adoration; not merely for the animal *per se*, however, but as the representative of a principle or quality, found not elsewhere, but which must have come from the supreme Osiris.

Some fifteen or twenty years ago I descended, with Rev. Mr. Eames and lady of Providence, into one of those deep, dusty, underground *cat-acombs* which border the Nile; but our principal discoveries were piles of

broken pots and tainted rags and one single earthen jar containing an ibis. Mrs. Eames added the latter to her ample collection, but I believe both were lost on the way home. No cat was moused out of the mass of rubbish—the dust of ages covered, us with a sacred shroud, that which young Egypt, in ancient days, had fondled and caressed. The goddess Sleep had folded in her gentle arms, perchance for an eternal night, that which, from its wakeful, watchful mood in the hours of the stars, had once been dedicated to the moon.

Regarding the cat in Britain in early times, there is curious evidence of its great rarity and value, in a Welsh law quoted by Pennant—"a law of the reign of Howell the Good, who died in 938 A. D.—fixing the prices of cats according to their age and qualities, beginning with a price for a kitten before it could see, and enacting that if any one stole or killed the cat that guarded the prince's granary, he was to forfeit a milk ewe, its fleece and lamb; or as much wheat as when poured on the cat suspended by its tail, the head touching the floor, would form a heap high enough to cover the tip of the tail."

The Chinese cat brings an involuntary smile to the lips of the children of the Occident, because of its pendulous ears, while its remarkably soft glossy fur wins at once their favor.

The Angora cats, which I have seen sitting on the counters of several of the glove and fancy-good shops of Paris, were large, beautiful and gentle, though what I am about to state may seem to contradict the last assertion. I was, for a long time, in the habit of dining at a certain hour at a restaurant in the Rue Vivienne where there was one of these Angora cats. One day he attracted my notice by coming and sitting in a chair very near me. I paid him considerable attention, and ever after that, though I never saw him sitting near any one else, he came in the chair nearest to me that happened to be vacant. He seemed to wait for me, and single me out among the hundreds who came and went. One afternoon, the chair next to mine being occupied, he took the one on the oppo-

site side of the table. Beneath the table I playfully extended my hand, but he so suddenly seized it and I so suddenly withdrew it that the back of it along its whole extent was deeply cut as if with a sharp knife. He seemed much mortified by his mistake, went away and came no more.

I know of an instance in the country where an American cat had two kittens, one white and one black. The white one being considered the prettiest, was much more caressed than the other; but it was given to a farmer's wife who wanted it, and who lived about a mile distant. Soon the black kitten was missing; and not long after the mother came bringing in her mouth the white one and laid it at the feet of its former mistress. The mother had, indeed, carried off the black one and exchanged it for the other; seeming to understand the difference in the appreciation which the family had exhibited.

Like dogs, cats are jealous of attention paid to another of their species; though they have a different way of showing it. I once had a cat so old she had ceased to purr. A kitten accidentally came to the house who purred most vigorously. The old cat disappeared and did not return for three days—when the little one had departed—and then made great efforts to purr, herself, though she succeeded very indifferently.

It is somewhat strange that cats have been objects of superstition in many countries, though it is more than probable that common origin may be credited for it all. In Italy, in the eleventh century, there was a society called Patarini. They met in their synagogues at the first watch of night, and having carefully closed all the windows and doors, waited in silence till, it is said—though it may have been gravely reported to burlesque them—a black cat of extraordinary bigness descended among them by a rope. This animal they then kissed; and putting out the lights, committed all manner of excesses.

In the *Reliquiae Antiquae* is a list of the "errors of the Waldenses," taken from an English manuscript, in which occurs the statement that those fanatics worshipped the devil who appeared to them in the form of a cat.

In 1232 and 1233, the Pope Gregory IX, issued two bulls against a sect in the north of Germany, known as Stedingers. They had assumed an independence which he did not like, and hence he commenced a crusade against them. Among other things he

charged them with having a toad to kiss when a novice was introduced, and that, after a banquet which followed other revolting ceremonies, there stepped out of a statue in the place of meeting an enormous black cat, which was to receive also the salutation of a kiss in a very indecent manner.

In 1307, there were the most infamous charges possible made against the Knight Templars. Among others, it was stated that, "despite of the Saviour, they sometimes worshipped a cat."

At the witches Sabbath, which seems to have been an invention of the clergy, there were among many grotesque, ludicrous and vulgar scenes, one where all danced back to back, each one having a cat fastened to the tail of his shirt.

In our own day, some people prophesy rainy weather from a cat washing its face. On board ship, also, the sailors predict a storm from the frolics of a cat, while one mewing dolefully on the housetop is supposed to portend death or disaster. The greatest injustice has indeed almost always been done poor Tabby, and Buffon is partly to blame for a continuation of a malevolent disposition towards this domestic animal.

Buffon entertained the opinion that the feline race was incapable of any affection; against this I must enter a protest, for I wish now to speak of my own pussy Thomas, recently deceased—"our cat."

Thomas was large, nearly all black with the exception of a pure white breast (indicative, it would seem, of purity within), and two white paws. His head was large and finely shaped; and his eyes were peculiarly mild, and with such a tender expression—in true keeping with his gentle disposition—one felt the same sadness in looking at them one does in gazing into the eyes of a gazelle. He hardly ever mewed, even when hungry, but he would sit by, and look at us till we divined his wants; or, he would lead the way to the cake closet, or entice some one by his winning ways to go with him into the garden in search of some one of the family who might be missing. He was taken ill, and one morning when I let him up from the cellar, he gave two such slow, low, plaintive mews, that the very recollection of them brings tears to my eyes. He was ill, very ill, and he often came, when he knew I was seated with my book for the evening, and asked me to hold him. Thus I indulged him till the disease in his mouth became offensive, and I was

obliged to put him down from my lap. He never came again, but placed himself under the sofa where he could see us all—his large beautiful eyes turned often towards us with such a melancholy expression, pleading as it were for help, that our hearts were often most tenderly touched. Once I went to him and found that a large tear had rolled down his cheek. The next day he went away to die. We never saw him more, but I could

not but ask myself if the *spirit* of so gentle, loving, docile a creature *could* be annihilated. There is no such thing as *death*, say the philosophers; and I am prepared to believe—to believe that the all-wise Father will not quench in the hereafter that which, as a beautiful creation, has aided in the illustration of this life, and served to mark along the sands of time the footprints of his power, benevolence and wisdom.

